



THE MAGNIFICENT QUR'AN

A Unique History of Preservation

EXHIBITION
ISLAM



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إِيَّاكَ تَعَدُّ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْمَشْرِخَ لَكَ صَدْرُكَ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وَزْرَكَ
الَّذِي أَقْبَضَ ظَهْرَكَ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ فَإِنَّ
مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا فَإِذَا فُزْتُ
فَارْجَبْ وَآلِي رَبِّكَ فَارْجَبْ

سُورَةُ النَّبِيِّ مَكِّيَّةٌ مَثَانُ آيَاتُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَالنَّبِيِّ وَالرَّسُولِ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ وَهَذَا
الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ
تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

وَعَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ



In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful.

THE MAGNIFICENT QUR'AN

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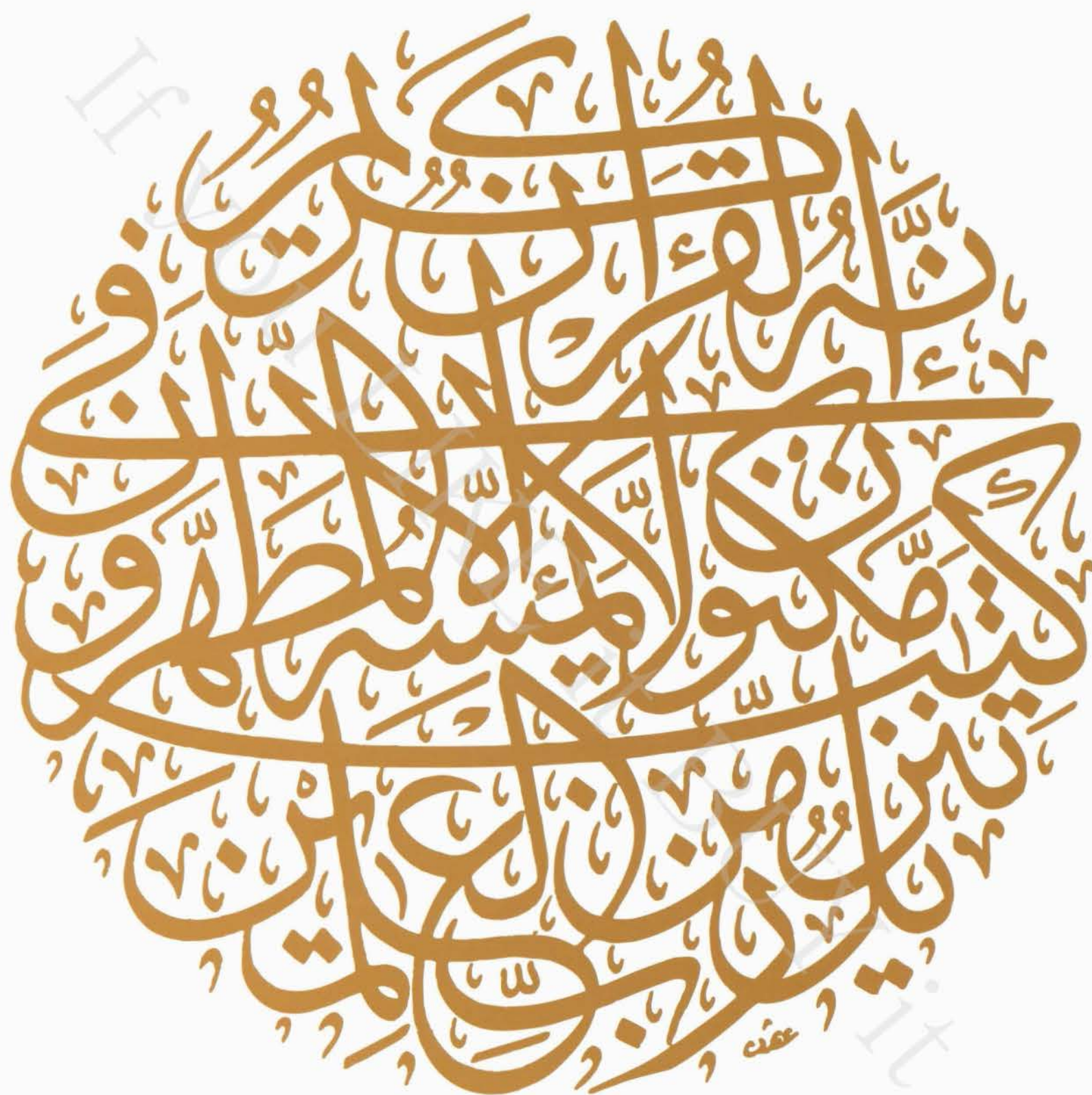


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In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful.

*“That (this) is indeed an honourable recitation (the Noble Qur’an).
In a Book well-guarded.
Which none can touch but the purified.”*

Surah al-Waaqi’ah (The Event) 56: 77-79.



Front cover: a magnificent 16th century Qur'an from the Iraq region written on beige coloured paper in *rayhani* script. The left hand page shows the end of Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night, 17) with the start of Surah al-Kahf (The Cave, 18) opposite.

Back cover: 18th century Qur'an from the Saharan region of Africa written in *sahrawi* script on thick paper. The start of Surah TaaHaa (20) is shown on the left hand page.

End papers: the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) in two parts from a Qur'anic manuscript written in *rayhani* Arabic script, Iraq, 16th century.

Page 1: Arabic calligraphy written in *thuluth* script reading, "In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful".

Page 2: magnificent 16th century Qur'anic manuscript copy from the Middle East showing Surah ash-Sharh (The Opening Forth, 94) and Surah at-Teen (The Fig, 95).

Page 5: beautifully illustrated Qur'anic calligraphy from Surah al-Waaqi'ah (The Event, 56) verses 77-79 penned in a circular style using traditional *thuluth* script.

Page 7 (opposite): decorative text page containing the first portion of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a complete Qur'an dating back to the 17th century copied in the Indian subcontinent using *naskh* script within a cloud motif.

Pages 8 & 9: decorative carpet pages from volume one of Sultan Baybar's seven volume Qur'an, dated 1305-06 (held at the British Library, London). The Qur'anic text written in white *kufic* script is from Surah al-Waaqi'ah (The Event, 56) verses 77-80. **"That (this) is indeed an honourable recitation (the Noble Qur'an). In a Book well-guarded (with Allah in the heaven, i.e. Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz). Which (that Book with Allah) none can touch but the purified (i.e. the angels). A Revelation (this Qur'an) from the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)."**

Page 10: the start of Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night, 17) from a Qur'an dated 1269 AH (1891 CE) written in Afghanistan. The text is elegantly written in a traditional *naskh* script within a cloud motif surrounded by extensively decorated geometric floral design work. The calligraphers name is inscribed on the back page as Ghulam Mahuidin.

Page 11 (second title page): highly illuminated arabesque Surah al-Baqarah chapter header, from an 18th century North African Qur'an.

Pages 12 & 13: elegant *muhaqqaq* calligraphy of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1).

Page 14: visually intense Surah al-Falaq (The Daybreak, 113) from a 17th century Qajar Qur'an written in Persia. Exquisitely decorated throughout using precious gold and other colours written in *naskh* script on handmade polished paper.

Pages 18 & 21: elaborately decorated pages with Surah an-Naas (Mankind, 114) and Surahs al-Ikhlaas (The Purity, 112) and al-Falaq (The Daybreak, 113) from a 16th century Qur'an.

Page 22: close-up view of Surah al-Falaq (The Daybreak, 113) from a large Mamluk Qur'an leaf written in *muhaqqaq* script, Egypt, 14th century.

Page 24 & 25: close up view of verse 56 from Surah al-Ahzab (The Confederates, 33) taken from a 400 year old Qur'an copied in Iraq. The text is written in a refined *rayhani* script using black ink and set within a multi-coloured lined border. Large gold coloured roundels act as verse separators.

Page 26: detail of a gold and blue coloured marginal medallion from a 12th century Abbasid Qur'an. The Arabic word for the number ten (*ashara*) written in *eastern kufic* script within concentric circles indicates the end of a 10th verse.

Page 27 (third title page): exceptional hand painted late 19th century Qur'anic calligraphy in *thuluth* script with the words of the sixth verse from Surah al-Insaan (Man, 76); **"A spring wherefrom the slaves of Allah will drink, causing it to gush forth abundantly".**

Page 28: early 20th century Qur'an scroll beautifully hand painted in *thuluth* script from the Middle East, most likely from Lebanon or Syria. The words are from part of verse 21 of Surah Yusuf (Joseph, 12); **"And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not."**

Page 30: 19th century page from a complete Qur'an beautifully hand written in traditional *naskh* style Arabic script showing the first few verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2). Originating from the Ottoman Empire, it is brilliantly decorated with geometric patterns throughout using precious gold and a variety of other colours. It is written on polished paper and bound in a leather hardcover with gold insets.

Page 32: beautifully illuminated 16th century Qur'an from Persia or Iraq. The start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) is written in elegant *rayhani* script on thin polished paper.

Page 34: detailed view of the word 'Allah' written in *bihari* Arabic script using gold ink with a black outline from a 15th century Qur'an copied in India.

Pages 36 & 37: extensive floral design work from an early 20th century Qur'an scroll originating in the Middle East beautifully penned in *thuluth* script. The calligraphy has been taken from verse 2 of Surah as-Saff (The Ranks, 61); **"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?"** The dimensions of the scroll are 100 cm long by 30 cm wide.

Pages 38 & 39: a series of images showing magnificently illuminated Arabic calligraphy written on a long scroll of thick paper. The dimensions of this scroll dated to 1826 CE are 400 cm long by 20 cm wide. The manuscript begins with the words 'In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful' written in *thuluth* script, in black ink, followed by verse 255 known as *Ayatul Kursi* from Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2), written in thick *thuluth* script in black ink within a cloud motif surrounded by a gold and red floral border.

Page 40: Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) from a 17th century Qajar Qur'an written in Persia. Richly decorated throughout using precious gold and other colours written in *naskh* script on handmade polished paper.

Page 42: the first few verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a 17th century Persian Qur'an.

Page 44: detail of vowel markings from an early 20th century Qur'an scroll.

Notes and abbreviations:

Bibliographic references: are indicated by a number written in superscript and cited in the reference section starting on page 569.

Qur'anic references: the name of the surah (chapter) in Arabic is followed by the English translation, the surah number and the number of the ayah (verse).

ﷻ: Arabic supplication 'may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him' (transliteration - *salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam*). It is a religious recommendation for Muslims to repeat this phrase whenever the name of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is mentioned or written. Although we have also endeavoured to write a salutation whenever a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is mentioned, it has not always been possible in every case, so 'May Allah be well pleased with them all'.

CE: The Common Era, sometimes known as the Current Era, begins with the year 1 on the Gregorian calendar. All of the dates throughout this book are given as Common Era dates unless stated otherwise.

AH: After Hijrah, Islamic dates are reckoned from the *Hijrah* (the migration of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from Makkah to Madinah, in the year 622 CE).

This book was researched, designed and published by Exhibition Islam.

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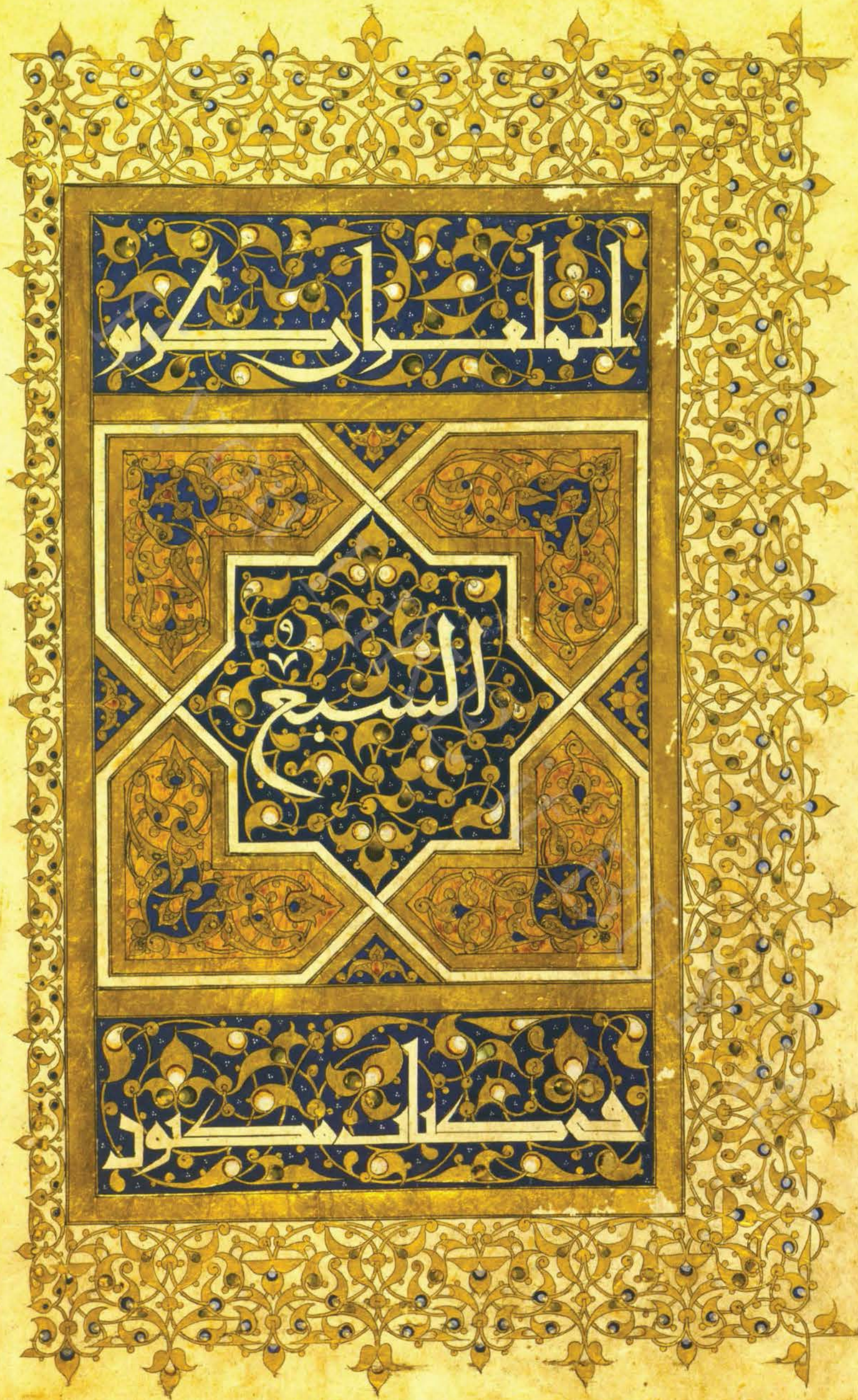
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سورة البقرة مكية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَى النَّبِيَّ الْكَافِرَ
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۚ
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ هُدًى نَظُنُّهُمْ أَنِ
يَمُوتُوا ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
نُفِخَ فِي سُورٍ مُمْتَلِئَةٍ
مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
سُوفَ نُصَبُّهُمْ عَلَى سُبُلٍ
مُخْتَلِفٍ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

ما ينادون وما ينادون





وَلَا تَنَاسُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا
يَمْكُرُونَ . إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ
فِي حَسَنَاتِهِمْ

سُورَةُ اسْرَائِيلَ وَمِائَةً وَتِسْعِينَ آيَةً

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الَّذِي أَسْرَى بَعْدَكَ
سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ
لَنَسْأَلَنَّهُ أَتَى مَنَاسِكَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
الَّذِي

بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ
الْأَيُّهَا الَّذِي هُوَ اللَّهُ
الْبَصِيرُ وَالْكَاتِبُ
الْبَصِيرُ

THE
MAGNIFICENT
QUR'AN
The Spoken Word of Allah



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وَأَنَا لَكَ نَبِيٌّ حَزِينٌ أَفَدِنَا الصَّارِطَ
أَمْ نَبِيٌّ تَقِي صَرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَهَمَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
غَيْرُ الْمَخْضُورِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ سَاجِدُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۝ وَمِنْ

شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ

الْعُقَدِ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ

حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

عَمَّا نَسُوا حَتَّى هُمْ فِي



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سُورَةُ النَّاسِ مَكِّيَّةٌ هِيَ سِتُّ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ
الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
مَلِكِ

الْقُدُّوسِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي مَنَّ عَلَيْنَا

وَصَلَّى عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ

وَعَلَّمَ الْاُمَّةَ الْقُرْآنَ الْعَرَبِيَّ

وَمَنْتَ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبْدَلُ

اِكْلَامٍ وَلَا يَمُوتُ

Foreword

This stunning book is for those readers with an interest in seeing how the Noble Qur'an has been preserved over the last fourteen centuries. Using fine examples from the magnificent collection of Qur'anic manuscripts held by Exhibition Islam, many of which have been displayed here for the first time, this work shows how the Arabic words of the Qur'an have remained unchanged since its revelation.

The Exhibition Islam Qur'an Collection presented in this book has been carefully collected over a number of years and features a wide array of manuscripts from across the Islamic world. The collection as a whole highlights how the text of the Qur'an has been preserved over the centuries across the globe. Indeed no other book has undergone such rigorous preservation criteria, nor been as widely copied, as the Qur'an. It has an unbroken chain of preservation from the time of revelation in the 7th century to the modern day; both orally and in written form.

One of the finest aspects of Exhibition Islam's collection is that it features Qur'anic manuscripts written during every century of Islam and by a variety of people. Master calligraphers would apply their expertise in producing the most exquisite and lavish manuscripts. Professional scribes would write hundreds or perhaps thousands of manuscripts for sale to the general public. Amateurs would write personal copies which would very often be passed down through their family, generation after generation. No matter who would write the Qur'an, it was a painstakingly difficult process which would require checking and correcting before distribution to ensure the preservation of the Divine Words.

A particularly unique quality is the sheer range of geographic regions which feature as part of the Exhibition Islam Collection. With an area stretching from Spain across to Indonesia and from Africa up to China the wondrous and sometimes lavish calligraphy which has been used to write historical Qur'ans has inspired generations and is showcased in the collection. Many of the Qur'ans are complete and in excellent condition, whilst others are in a very delicate state, or consist of just a few pages or even a rare single folio in some cases.

The type of writing style used by devoted Muslims to copy the Qur'an would have depended on the region as well as personal preference. The collection therefore contains examples of Qur'anic calligraphy ranging from *kufic*, *eastern kufic*, *muhaqqaq*, *naskh* and *maghribi* as well as a number of other distinct regional styles. Whereas many of the manuscripts have very clearly defined script styles, some combine a multitude of scripts to complement and beautify the text, whilst others have hybrid scripts which are unique and unlikely to be found elsewhere.

In more recent times traditional handwriting of Qur'ans has become rare with the widespread use of the modern printing press. Exhibition Islam is also privileged to have in its possession early printed Qur'ans, both in Arabic as well as early translations into European languages. The collection has been further enhanced by the addition of miniature Qur'ans, including a complete Qur'an that has been etched onto a plastic sheet the size of a debit card using modern laser technology.

Opposite
Elaborately designed end page from a 16th century Qur'anic manuscript with the whole of Surah an-Naas (Mankind, 114) written in *naskh*. The surah header is written in white *riqa* script upon blue ground enclosed within a foliate panel. The main text panel is divided into three illuminated compartments framed by a large floral border. A variety of interlocking shapes project into the outer margins on three sides with extending blue finials. Individual verses are marked with simple rosettes pointed in blue.





Exhibition Islam's Qur'an Collection started with a few manuscripts from the Middle East, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire and slowly expanded to include examples from across the world. Exhibition Islam's curators then worked diligently to bring into the collection, everyday Qur'ans that not only enhanced the quality of the collection but also told the story of its preservation. Each manuscript is therefore unique, not only in terms of the writing, but also in the materials used such as the type of paper or ink. Some cultures and geographic regions have used locally available materials for the production of paper, whilst other manuscripts have been written on imported machine made paper. The earliest manuscripts are often written on prepared animal skin known as vellum or parchment. The styles of binding also vary considerably according to the region and period. Some African Qur'ans are not bound at all and would have been carried as loose pages in a satchel or pouch.

Thus each manuscript carries its own story, and is a part of the overall process of preservation and transmission of the Divine text. Exhibition Islam is proud to be part of the process of preservation and takes its role seriously in safeguarding these unique and irreplaceable manuscripts, and at the same time making them available for the world to see, witness and testify that the words of Noble Qur'an have indeed not changed since its revelation in the 7th century CE.

Photography of the collection for the production of this book has also been another major task that was carried out by Exhibition Islam's own design team. An exciting part of the imaging process was handling pieces that are beautifully illuminated with decorative opening and centre pages or that have rare calligraphy styles from remote regions of the world. It was also fascinating to come across calligraphers' names or the date when the Qur'an was written, or some other notes inscribed in the margins.

Due to the delicate nature and age of many of the manuscripts, flash photography and harsh lighting was avoided. All of the Qur'an manuscripts were therefore, photographed under natural daylight using a high definition digital camera. Most of the Qur'ans and single pages were photographed from multiple angles using macro and extreme close-up lens settings. This process resulted in a huge expansion of Exhibition Islam's image library, which presented the editorial team with thousands of images to choose from to complete this project. It is also important to note that some of the Qur'ans featured in this book have been printed larger than their actual size for the readers benefit. For the sake of completion we have also included a number of famous Qur'ans held by the Topkapi Saray Museum in Istanbul and the British Library in London.

The Exhibition Islam Qur'an Collection saw a major launch at The Islamic Cultural Centre in London during 2005. This event was unique because manuscripts from every century of Islam were on display for the first time in the UK. Since then parts of the collection have been showcased in many cities across the world including Copenhagen (Denmark), Tromsø and Oslo (Norway), Cape Town (South Africa), Doha (Qatar) and Dubai (UAE).

Lastly, as the Noble Qur'an is such a unique book, we felt that any book which describes some of its Divine aspects should also contain some special features. This is one of the reasons behind the very large format of this current book and the fact that we have given it seven different names displayed on separate title pages.

Exhibition Islam Editorial Team.
Ramadan 1430 AH.
September 2009 CE.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ الْغُلُقُوتَ فِي أَمْتٍ مَعْلُومَةٍ
وَيُفْقِدُ الْغُلُقُوتَ فِي أَمْتٍ مَعْلُومَةٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى
وَيُمْسِكُ الْمَوْتَ

سُبْحَانَ الْقَلْبِ عَمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَاقِ
مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ سِتْرِ عَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَّتْ
وَمِنْ سِتْرِ الْغَاسِقَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

وَمِنْ سِتْرِ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا

خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقَاتِ

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ



In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful.

“The Most Gracious (Allah)!
He has taught (you mankind) the Qur’an (by His Mercy).
He created man. He taught him eloquent speech.”

Surah ar-Rahmaan (The Most Gracious) 55: 1-4.



In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful.

“Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion; and He is Able to do all things.
Who has created death and life that He may test which of you is best in deed.
And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.”

Surah al-Mulk (The Dominion) 67: 1-2.



Abu Hurayrah reported that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

“He who does not thank Allah does not thank people.”

(Abu Dawood)

All Praise is due to Allah. He is The Most High. The All-Powerful and The All-Mighty.
The All-Knowing and The All-Wise. He is The One True God. The Lord of the Universe and there is no one like Him.
We praise Him, seek His help and ask His forgiveness.

We thank Allah for giving us the opportunity to complete this magnificent project.
We would also like to thank all of those who have helped Exhibition Islam over the years
as well as those who have contributed to the Exhibition Islam Qur’an Collection.

May Allah accept from us all our good deeds.
Ameen.

Finally, we kindly request that everyone respects this book with the utmost care
due to the presence of Qur’anic verses in Arabic, which Muslims regard
as the Spoken Word of Allah, The Most High.

Unless otherwise stated, all of the Qur’anic manuscripts shown in this book form part of the
Exhibition Islam Qur’an Collection.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ تَجِيئُكَ

وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا

وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا
وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا
وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا صَلَوَاتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنْتَ أَتَانَا

*"Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.
O you who believe, send your blessings on him,
and salute him with all respect."*

Surah al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 33: 56.



مسجد شاه

الله

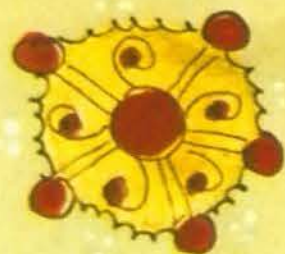


THE MAGNIFICENT
QUR'AN
A Literary Challenge to Mankind



AN EXHIBITION ISLAM BOOK

قَالَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ



Munir Ahmad

‘O Allah have mercy upon his soul and enter him into Paradise.’

Ameen.

سورة التوبة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُسْقُونَ وَيَقِيمُونَ مَا أَنزَلَ إِلَهُكَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أَنزَلَ
مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَيُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أَنزَلَ
مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَيُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً

سورة التوبة

Rashida Begum Alam

‘O Lord bestow your mercy upon our dear mother just as she loved us and took care of us when we were young.’

Ameen.

البقرة ناسخ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
لَئِنْ ذَلِكُ الْكِتَابُ لَأَرَبُ فِيهِ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا
أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَلَا آخِرَةَ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلٰى
هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ

Nasreen Asmat Hussain

‘O Allah have mercy upon her and let her dwell in Paradise forever.’

Ameen.



Hafiz Ahmad Ashraf

‘O Allah have mercy upon our dear teacher and enter him into Paradise.’

Muhammad Arshad

‘O Allah forgive our dear brother and let him dwell in Paradise forever.’

Ameen.





وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَقُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا يَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

وَلَا يَفْقَهُ الْيَهُودُ وَإِنَّمَا الْإِنْسَانُ لَشَفِيعٌ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ نَسْفَعُ الْمَاءَ فِيهِ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ الْفِئْتُمْ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَكَ سَمْعًا وَبَصَرًا وَفُؤَادًا عَظِيمًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ نَازِحًا وَجَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَى الْوِجْدَانِ ذَقِيمًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَى الْوِجْدَانِ ذَقِيمًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَى الْوِجْدَانِ ذَقِيمًا

سُوِّفَ التَّحْمَاكِسُ وَمِيَالِي

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحِيمِ

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِنَّا نَعُدُّكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ

الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

إِنَّمَا وَكَلَّمَا تَهْلِكُ وَفَا

If you LIKE it BUY it



THE MAGNIFICENT **QUR'AN**
A Timeless Miracle

سوره البقره مائت و ستم و سمانه

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بنام خدا می بخشایند مهربان

الَمْ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى

هم خدا می دانست که این کتاب بیست روشن که هیچ شک نیست در آن راه نهد

لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

مهر پر هیز کار انداز آنانکه میسکروند بنا دیده

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

و بیامد از رند نماز را و آنچه روزی دادیم ایشانرا خرج می کنند

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ

و آنانکه میسکروند و آنچه فرود آمدستند و آنچه فرود آمد

مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ

پس آنانکه و با آخرت ایشانند یقین دارند و آنانکه

THE
MAGNIFICENT
QUR'AN

Unrivalled Beauty and Tranquillity





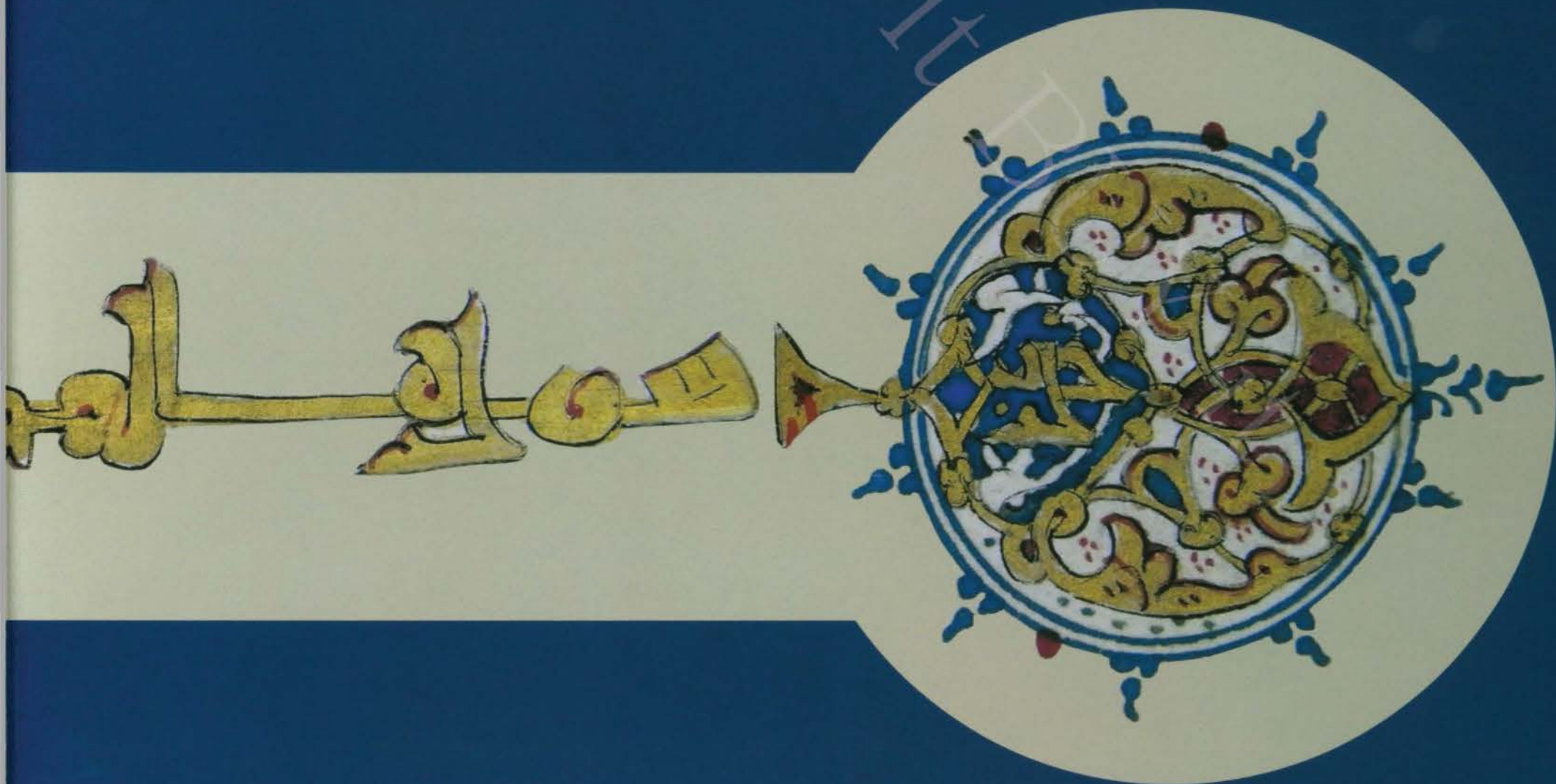
THE
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QUR'AN
The Text that Changed the World



THE MAGNIFICENT
QUR'AN
Manuscripts Through the Ages



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Preface

Guidance, comfort, beauty and inimitability. The Noble Qur'an represents all of these qualities and much more; it forms the very foundation of the Islamic faith, a remembrance in times of joy and anguish, a sea of knowledge and a treasury of wisdom, all in the most exquisite style. Its verses are etched in the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of people, both young and old. Its melodious recitation can be heard night and day around the globe. For the faithful it provides an insight into our ultimate reality and it represents a unique sign from God Almighty (Allah¹).

Allah, the Most High, has preserved the Qur'an and guaranteed it from corruption until the end of time. Its meticulous preservation and transmission over the centuries in written form and orally through memorisation has ensured that the Qur'an available today is the same as that which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ² in the 7th century. The style of Arabic script may have varied over the centuries, but you will not find any two copies of the Qur'an that differ in content, regardless of the era or region in which they were written. The companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ memorised the Qur'an directly from him. They subsequently passed it onto their students, who in turn became the teachers for the next generation. This unique cycle of learning and teaching has continued over the centuries to the present day, with the result that there is an unbroken and authenticated chain of transmission through memorisation stretching back to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself. Combined with the availability of vast numbers of hand written historical manuscripts, this represents unequivocal evidence that the Qur'an we have today is indeed the same as that revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

This book is divided into three sections, the first deals with matters such as the previous Books of Allah, the fact that the Qur'an is the *Speech of Allah*, its gradual revelation, why the Qur'an is a unique and miraculous text and the challenge in the Qur'an. Interspersed through this section are beautiful examples of hand written Qur'anic manuscripts from different parts of the Islamic world. These have been grouped together by region and arranged in the following order; Ottoman, Middle Eastern, European, African, Persian, Indian subcontinent, Chinese and Far Eastern Qur'anic manuscripts.

The second part of the book 'The Qur'an through the Ages' shows manuscripts that date back to the very first century of Islam and provides a highly visual and fascinating journey through the last fourteen centuries. This section highlights the fact that the Noble Qur'an is unchanged and remains preserved in its original Arabic language, without the addition, omission or alteration of a single word since the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. To illustrate this unique point, alongside every historical manuscript, we have shown an image of the corresponding page from a standard modern Qur'an for the purposes of comparison. In addition, there are a series of maps which chart the origin of some of the most important manuscripts from the Exhibition Islam Qur'an Collection; the maps also show the spread of Islam over the centuries.

The third section of the book provides a brief overview of when the Qur'an first came into print. At the end there is a gallery with annotated images featuring more Qur'anic manuscripts held by Exhibition Islam. In this section we have also endeavoured to present examples of Qur'an manuscripts held by the British Library, London.



Opposite
Close-up view of the word 'Allah' in *muhaqqaq* Arabic script from a 12th century Mamluk Qur'an written on texture rich handmade paper.

نوعی انقباض مانده و شایع است

[illegible]

Introduction

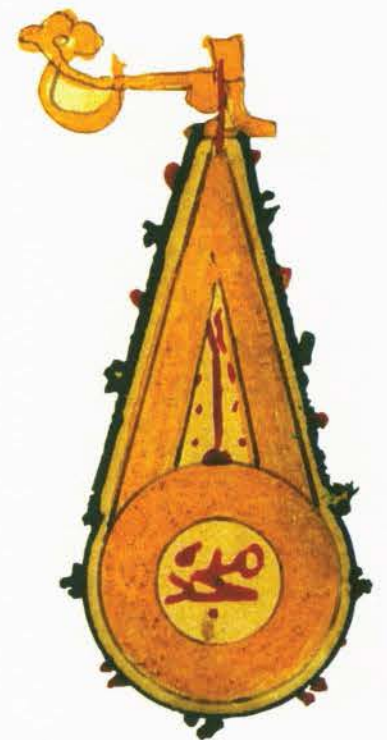
The Qur'an is the sacred book of Islam and is universally regarded by all Muslims as the *Spoken Word of Allah*, which was revealed by the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over a period of 23 years. Unchanged since the start of its revelation in the year 610 CE, the Qur'an is unquestionably one of the world's most important and influential texts, providing a source of guidance and inspiration for hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world. For more than 1400 years, the Qur'an has functioned as a principal catalyst in the transformation of capricious societies towards stability, progression and modernity. It contains a universal message for the guidance of all of mankind, and it remains unique in its explanation of the purpose of life.

In Islam, the Qur'an commands the highest rank and status and provides the primary source of Islamic faith and doctrine. The name 'al-Qur'an', is not a name that was introduced by Muslims, rather it is the very name that Allah chose to refer to this Book. The word 'al-Qur'an' is a verbal noun in the Arabic language that literally translates to mean 'the reading'. Historically, however, the word Qur'an has always been used to refer to the Book that was revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Structurally, the Qur'an is divided into 114 chapters (*surahs*) with over 6,000 verses (*ayahs*). The Arabic word, *ayah* actually means 'miracle' or 'sign' emphasising that the sentences are not just verses of a poem but each phrase is a sign from the Almighty Creator. Each of the Qur'an's 114 chapters are given a title according to its contents. The Qur'an opens with a beautiful short prayer known as al-Fatihah (The Opening) with the remaining chapters ordered according to the instructions left by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

In the vast majority of written copies of the Qur'an, the opening surah is usually highly decorated with splendid geometric floral patterns. There are also other useful divisions of the Qur'an, for example the thirty equally sized parts called *juz'*, or the seven equally sized parts called *manzil*. These divisions are helpful for memorisation and for those who wish to complete recitation of the whole Qur'an within a month or in a week. In many Qur'ans, *juz'* are further divided into two *hizb* with each being subdivided into quarters. Surahs are also usually divided into parts called *ruku*, usually indicated by the Arabic letter *ayn* with a number in the margin.

The Qur'an has traditionally been recited aloud, but its preservation and transmission over the centuries has been both oral through memorisation and by writing. From the very beginning of its Divine revelation, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was caused to instantaneously memorise the Qur'an as it was being revealed. Initially, the verses were committed to memory and transmitted from believer to believer. Later on, as the number of verses revealed began to increase, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would have one of his many scribes immediately write down the revelation and also gave instructions as to where the verse should be placed. The result was that by the time Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away in the year 632 CE the Qur'an had been completely memorised by numerous companions in the order that it exists today. Moreover, it had also been written down in its entirety on various materials such as bone, papyrus, palm leaves, stone and on fragments of parchment or vellum. All of these factors were vital for the collection of a master Qur'an codex (*mushaf*) that would occur a few years later.



Opposite

The first five verses of Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets, 21) from a complete Ottoman Qur'an, 17th or 18th century. This magnificent Qur'an is finely written in *naskh* script with highly decorated chapter headers and floral decoration on the side. *Naskh* literally means 'copying' or 'transcription' and is the most common script of the six basic styles used for writing Arabic. These round scripts commonly referred to as the 'Six Pens' gained popularity from the late 11th century onwards and eventually replaced the large angular *kufic* type scripts. The six pens are grouped in sized pairs; *tawqi'* and its smaller counterpart *riqa*; *thuluth* and *naskh*; *muhaqqaq* and *rayhani*. From these, many other forms have been developed over the centuries.



Right
Ornate opening pages from an early 17th century Ottoman Qur'an. Beautifully written in *naskh* script with floral patterns surrounded by a geometric gold leaf border. Location: Topkapi Museum, Istanbul.

Opposite page
Heavily decorated incipit (opening) pages showing Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a Qur'an written in *naskh*, Ottoman, 18th century.

It is also important when discussing the revelation of the Qur'an to mention the condition of the Arab people living during the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Arabs were largely nomadic, with only a few tribes living in cities. Family feuds and tribal wars that could last generations were the norm. Women were considered no better than domestic animals, slavery was common place and the poor and helpless in society were treated harshly. Some desert Arab tribes also engaged in the horrible ritual of burying alive their unwanted female infants.

The religion of the Arabs was a curious mixture of polytheism and a belief in Allah. The *Kaaba*¹ at the heart of Makkah was home to some 360 idols. The great tribe of Quraysh were the custodians of the *Kaaba*. They dominated the city, maintaining a position of honour and respect amongst all Arabs. On the other hand there were also some virtuous qualities present in the Arab character such as courage, hospitality and a sense of personal and tribal honour that would be enviable even today. The spoken word, as a means of communication was given precedence over the written word. Poetry in particular was regarded as a highly valued art form.

Tribes would compete against each other to see who could produce the most skilled and eloquent poets. During the annual fair of *Ukaadh* in Makkah, poets would descend upon the sacred city from many parts of Arabia to compete for the honour of having their poem displayed on the door of the *Kaaba* for the whole of the following year.

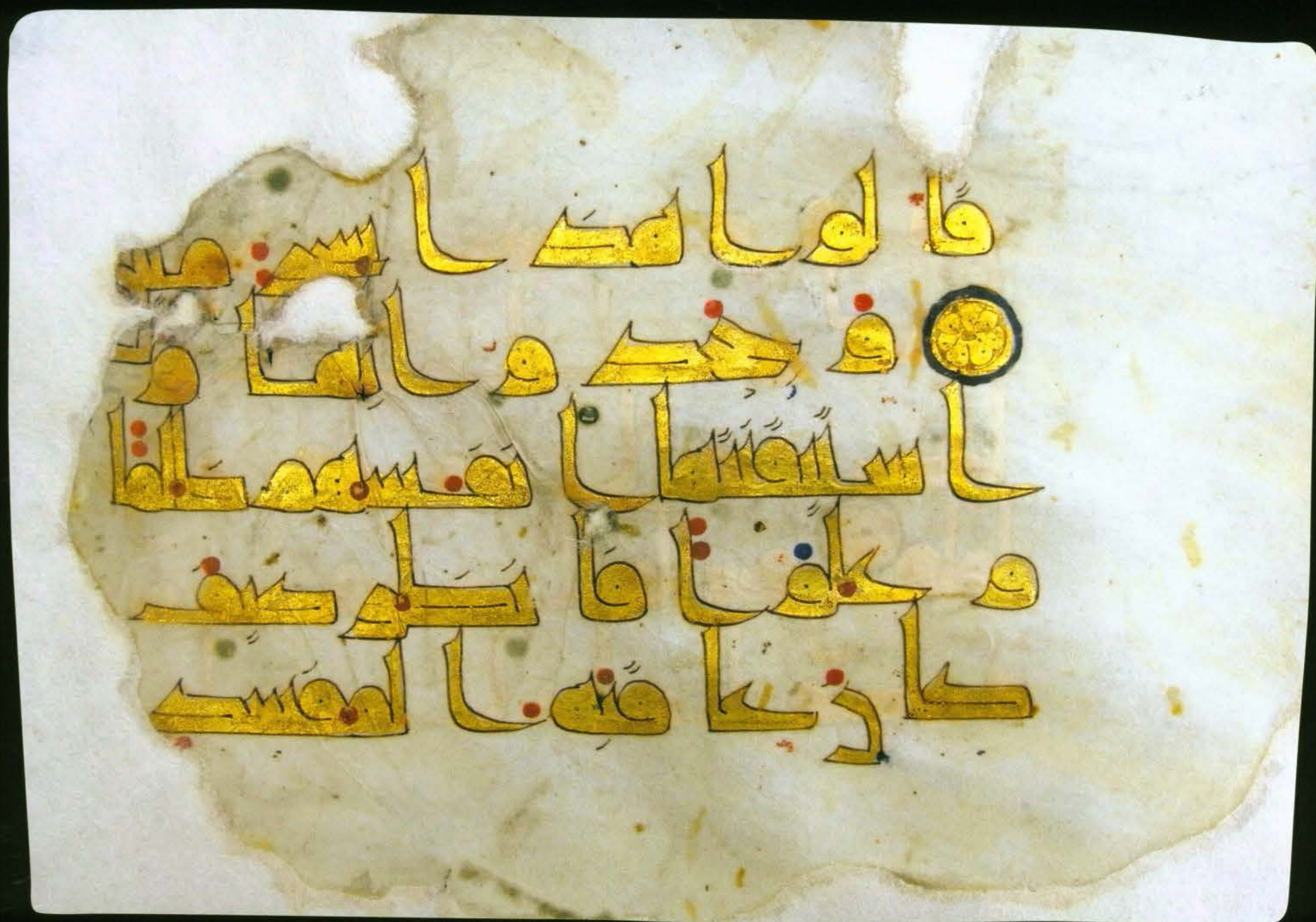
It was against this background that Allah revealed the Qur'an in an Arabic language that was so emotive and eloquent that the Arabs could clearly see that this was inimitable; and a miracle from their Lord. Allah challenged people at the time to bring forth something similar to the Qur'an but to this day the challenge has not been met.

"And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a chapter similar to it, if you are truthful. But if you do not do it, and of a surety you cannot do it, then fear the fire whose fuel are men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers."

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 23-24.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ
آمِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَنَزَقُوا مِنْهُمْ مَالًا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا نَزَّلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا نَزَّلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ
أَنَّ إِلَهُكُمُ الْمَلِكُ



Both sides from a 9th century Qur'anic manuscript written on vellum containing five lines of *kufic* script in gold with sepia outlines. This leaf from the Exhibition Islam Qur'an Collection is from a famous Qur'an written entirely in gold, known to have once been housed in Kairouan, Tunisia. Other leaves from the same manuscript are found in various public and private collections, including the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; the National Library and the National Institute of Archaeology, Tunis; Beit al-Qur'an, Bahrain; the Tareq Rajab Museum and the al-Sabah collection, Kuwait; the Nasser D. Khalili collection, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.²

The strikingly angular and very stylized *kufic* form of writing in this Qur'an leaf was used extensively during the early Islamic period, but was largely superseded by more rounded cursive styles such as *naskh* after the 10th century. *Kufic* script, however, remained in use for surah headings and marginal ornaments as well as for decorative purposes in architectural applications either on stone or mosaic. The text is vocalised using red dots with further diacritics marked in green and blue. Individual verses are separated by gold rosettes circled in blue. The page has undergone some repair work to damaged suffered around the edges. The writing on the right hand page starts with the 6th word (*baydhaa*) of verse 12 from Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27) and continues through to the left hand page ending on the last word (*mufsideen*) of verse 14.



سَلَامٌ عَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ

نَقُولُ الْمَانِصِفِ السِّنِّكَمُ الْكَذِبُ

هَذَا جَلَالٌ وَهَذَا أَحَدُ امْرَأَتَيْهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبُ
 الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يَفْلِحُونَ
 مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ
 هَارَوْا بِخَبَرِ مَا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَتْلٍ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاكُمْ
 وَلَكِنْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ تَظْلِمُونَ ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
 لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
 وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَعَفُودٌ رَحِيمٌ إِنَّ
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ شَاكِرًا لِنِعْمَةِ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ
 إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ وَلَبَّيْنَا فِي الْمَدِينَةِ حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّا

فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَرَحِمْنَا

Pages from an early Ottoman Qur'an written in two different script styles, 16th century. There are single lines of large *muhaqqaq* at the top and bottom of each page with ten lines of smaller *naskh* script in between. Floral shapes above the line are used to designate verse endings. Vowel and punctuation markings are penned in black, red and ultramarine. The *shamsa* medallions in the margins indicate the start and finish of the 14th section (*ruku*) within the surah. The right hand page starts with part of verse 110 from Surah an-Nahl (The Bee, 16) and continues through to verse 122 on the left hand page.

مُجَاهِدٌ وَأَوْصِرُ وَإِيَّاكَ

رَبِّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
تَحْمِلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُونَ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَدِيمَةٍ آمِنَةٍ مَطْمِئِنَةٍ بَنِيهَا
يَذُوقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ
فَأَذَانُهَا لِلَّهِ لِبَاسِ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَصْنَعُونَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ
فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ فَكَلِمَاتٍ نَقَلْنَا عَنْ
اللَّهِ صَلَواتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُ مَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ كُتُبَ الْإِيمَانِ
تَقْدُورُ مِنْ إِيْمَانِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَالْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّامُ وَالْحِمَمُ
الْمُخْتَرِبُ وَمَا أَهْلُ لَيْلٍ لَيْلٍ اللَّهُ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطَرَّ غَيْرُ بَارِعٍ وَلَا

عَلَيْكُمْ فَالِإِلَهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ وَلَا



كُلُّهَا

الملك

اقرا باسم ربك الذي خلق
الحمد لله رب العالمين

الحمد لله رب العالمين

مَلِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
إِنَّا إِلَهُكَ الْحَقُّ
أَنْتَ رَاحِمٌ رَحِيمٌ
الَّذِي يَهْدِي
الْمَلَأَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين

The Need for Messages from Allah

The Qur'an was revealed at a time when humanity was in the depth of darkness. Since the beginning of creation, Allah in His Infinite Mercy has not left humanity without guidance as to how to conduct our lives. He has sent us many messages of guidance through His various prophets and messengers. These noble souls taught people the true purpose of existence (i.e. to worship Allah alone) and they also showed people through example how to live pious lives by following the Divine laws laid down by Allah.

In today's world of materialism, scientific advancement and social decay, much of humanity remains ambivalent towards Allah's Final Message, delivered by the Last Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Indeed, those who turn away from Allah's Message are described in the Qur'an as frightened wild donkeys fleeing a hunter and ignoring all around them.

“Then what is wrong with them (i.e. the polytheists, the disbelievers) that they turn away from (receiving) admonition? As if they were (frightened) wild donkeys. Fleeing from a hunter, or a lion, or a beast of prey.”

Surah al-Muddaththir (The One Enveloped) 74: 49-51.

Another very important point to note is that the command to worship Allah alone without associating any partners with Him, as well as following the laws that He has established, has remained the same from the very first prophet, Adam (peace be upon him) through to the last Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ. Allah explains this in the Qur'an by saying:

“He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islamic Monotheism) which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad ﷺ), and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it. Intolerable for the disbelievers is that (Islamic Monotheism) to which you (O Muhammad ﷺ) call them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills, and guides to Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience.”

Surah ash-Shooraa (The Consultation) 42: 13.

The previous Books of Allah

Many of the previous prophets and messengers received guidance from Allah in the form of Divinely revealed books. These were meant for the purposes of teaching the people of that time; a fact that is highlighted throughout the Noble Qur'an:

“Say (O Muslims): “We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and to the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord.

We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam).”

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 136.



Opposite

The start of Surah al-'Alaq, (The Clot, 96) from a 16th century copy of a Qur'an manuscript written in the Middle East. The first five verses of this surah were the first to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: **“Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.”**

This visually intense Qur'an is extravagantly illuminated, and written in a variety of styles. Each text page has large lines of *muhaqqaq* at the top and bottom, *thuluth* in the middle with four lines of *naskh* in compartments in between. The text is set within a bed of multi-coloured foliate work bordered by decorated panels on either side that form a rectangular frame. Floret shapes are used to mark the end of a verse. Following convention, directional ornaments on the wide margins are inscribed using *kufic* style script.

Opposite

The first five verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from an 18th century Qur'an written in the Ottoman empire. The manuscript is handwritten in *naskh* and set within a trellis of geometric patterns. Interestingly, the header is written in *thuluth* script, which is recognized by its large and rounded endings.

Allah also mentions sending revelation to His Prophets in the following verse:

“Verily, We have sent the Revelation to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) as We sent the Revelation to Noah and the Prophets after him; We (also) sent the Revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon; and to David We gave the Psalms. And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, – and to Moses Allah spoke directly. Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the (coming of) Messengers. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.”

Surah an-Nisa (The Women) 4: 163 – 165.

In another verse Allah mentions some of the previously revealed books and the fact that the Qur'an confirms these scriptures. The Qur'an, however, is directed at providing the whole of mankind with guidance; not just a specific nation or tribe.

“Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (Muhammad ﷺ) with truth, confirming what came before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel, aforetime, as a guidance to mankind. And He sent down the Criterion [of judgement between right and wrong (this Qur'an)]. Truly, those who disbelieve in the verses of Allah, for them there is a severe torment; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Able of Retribution.

Truly, nothing is hidden from Allah, in the earth or in the heaven. He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills. None has the right to be worshipped but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. It is He Who has sent down to you (Muhammad ﷺ) the Book (this Qur'an). In it are verses that are entirely clear, they are the foundations of the Book; and others not entirely clear.

So, as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation (from the truth) they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking discord, and seeking for its hidden meanings, but none knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in it; the whole of it (clear and unclear verses) are from our Lord.” And none receive admonition except men of understanding.”

Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan) 3: 2 – 7.

The ‘People of the Book’

All of the Divinely revealed books preceding the Qur'an have been either lost through the course of history, or changed so drastically that they no longer represent the original revelation. For example, the present day scriptures of the Jews and Christians do not contain their original revealed content. The difference between Muslims and the followers of other faiths is that only the Muslims take their guidance from a complete Divine revelation, that is available in its original language, without having been changed in anyway by man.

The Jews no longer have access to the complete teachings of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and they as a people have rejected two of the major prophets who came after him. Similarly, the Christians have extremely limited knowledge of the original teachings of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as any written material disappeared a few decades after him. Towards the end of the first century a few biographical works did appear by anonymous authors, but none had first hand knowledge of Jesus's life. These texts form part of the New Testament Bible that we have today. However, these have been altered to such an extent that even though there are many historical manuscripts in existence today, no two are the same.¹

Despite the complete lack of textual integrity, Allah still frequently uses the term ‘People of the book (or scripture)’ in the Qur'an when referring to the Jews and the Christians. This is because they have definitely received Divine revelation in the past.

سورة الفرقان
الفصل الثاني

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْكَافِرُ لَئِنْ هَدَى الْمُنْعِقِينَ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى مَدَى
مَنْزِلَتِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

سورة الفرقان
الفصل الثاني



Part of an early 20th century decorative Qur'an scroll showing the first four words of Surah ad-Dhuha (The Morning Hours, 93). Hand written in large *thuluth* script and splendidly illustrated with strong use of colour. Each word of the surah is written within alternating blue and red panels. Most likely of Syrian or Lebanese origin. The scroll measures 5 metres in length and has a width of 30 cm.

However, Allah also makes it clear that these earlier Divine revelations are no longer valid, because they have been superseded by the final revelation, the Qur'an. Even a cursory study of the Qur'an reveals that a large part of it deals with the 'People of the Book'. Allah highlights where they have strayed from His commandments and calls upon them throughout to accept His Final Message that was delivered by His Final Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ. For example Allah says:

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah (Alone), and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah." Then, if they turn away, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims."

Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan) 3: 64.

"O people of the Scripture! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) making (things) clear to you, after a break in (the series of) Messengers, lest you say: "There came to us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner." But now has come to you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. And Allah is Able to do all things."

Surah al-Maa'idah (The Table Spread) 5: 19.

The nature of the previous books

In mankind's ancient past, writing was largely composed of inscriptions on items such as leather, wood and stone tablets. Pages bound in book form did not exist so written text would have been mostly in the form of separate sheets. The scripture that was revealed by Allah to the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), for instance, is described in the Qur'an as *Suhuf* or 'sheets'; as in the following verses:

"Verily, this is in the former Scriptures – The Scriptures (Sheets) of Abraham and Moses."

Surah al-A'la (The Most High) 87: 18–19.

"Or is he not informed with what is in the Pages (Scripture) of Moses, and of Abraham who fulfilled (or conveyed) all that (Allah ordered him to do or convey)."

Surah an-Najm (The Star) 53: 36–37.

The 'sheets' sent down to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), however, are no longer with us and have been lost long ago. Similarly, the scripture that Allah revealed to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was the *Taurat*, although the Qur'an refers to it both as the 'book' and the 'sheets'. For example, when referring to the *Taurat* as the book, Allah Says in the Qur'an:



“Then, We gave Moses the Book, to complete (Our Favour) upon those who would do right, and explaining all things in detail and a guidance and a mercy that they might believe in the Meeting with their Lord.”

Surah al-An'aam (The Cattle) 6: 154.

A further example where Allah refers to the *Taurat* by name, is in Surah al-Maaidah where Allah Says:

“Verily, We did send down the *Taurat*, therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah’s Will, judged for the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests, for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah’s Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me (O Jews) and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.”

Surah al-Maaidah (The Table Spread) 5: 44.

After Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), when the Jewish tribes, collectively known as the ‘Children of Israel’ had strayed from Allah’s guidance, Allah sent further revelation to Prophet David (peace be upon him). This noble Prophet then led and guided the Children of Israel back towards the worship of Allah alone.

The particular revelation that was given to Prophet David (peace be upon him) was called the *Zabur* (Psalms). In the Arabic language *zabara* has the same meaning as *kataba* which means ‘wrote’. The Arabic word *Zabur* also has the same meaning as *kitaab* which means ‘book’. So when the word *Zabur* is mentioned in the Qur’an it usually refers to the book of revelation sent to the Prophet David (peace be upon him).

“Verily, We have sent the Revelation to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) as We sent the Revelation to Noah and the Prophets after him; We (also) sent the Revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon; and to David We gave the *Zabur*.”

Surah an-Nisa (The Women) 4: 163.

Again Allah says in the Qur’an when referring to Prophet David (peace be upon him) and the *Zabur*:

“And your Lord knows best all who are in the heavens and the earth. And indeed, We have preferred some of the Prophets to others, and to (David) We gave the *Zabur*.”

Surah al-Isra (The Night Journey) 17: 55.

16th century Qur’an written in *muhaqqaq* script from the Middle East. The scribe has used a very fine pen and copied the surah name in light green and red ink. There are eleven lines of text per page within a simple rectangular frame. Most of the pages have been repaired around the edges. The pages are open at Surah Muhammad (47).

A text page from a late 19th century Ottoman Qur'anic manuscript written in *naskh* script on very thin highly polished paper. The text starts with verse 149 of Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan, 3) and ends on verse 153. The large floral medallion in the margin indicates that the reader is three quarters of the way through the first *hizb* of the fourth *juz*'.

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was the last of the long line of prophets and messengers that Allah sent exclusively to the Children of Israel. The revelation which he received is referred to in the Qur'an as the *Injeel* (Gospel).

Known in the Qur'an as *Eesa ibn Maryam* (Jesus, son of Mary), Muslims have immense love and respect for this Messenger of Allah. He is regarded as a Prophet, a reformist, the 'anointed one' (Messiah) and the 'spirit of Allah' who was elevated to heaven. He is held in very high esteem by Muslims everywhere and is regarded as one of the greatest Messengers sent by Allah. His name is rarely mentioned without invoking Allah's peace upon him.

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was born miraculously, he spoke from the cradle as a baby, cured leprosy and those born deaf and blind, raised the dead and blew life into inanimate objects - all by the Will of Allah. Muslims do not believe that he was Allah or part of a trinity or that he was crucified or that he was the 'son of God'. In the Qur'an Allah refers to the *Injeel* as follows:

"And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave him the *Injeel* (Gospel), in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious.

Let the people of the *Injeel* (Gospel) judge by what Allah has revealed therein.

And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed (then) such (people) are the rebellious i.e. disobedient."

Surah al-Maaidah (The Table Spread) 5 : 46-47.

Again Allah Says:

"Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help Him (His religion) and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty. And indeed, We sent Noah and Abraham, and placed in their offspring Prophethood and Scripture. And among them there are some who are guided; but many of them are rebellious.

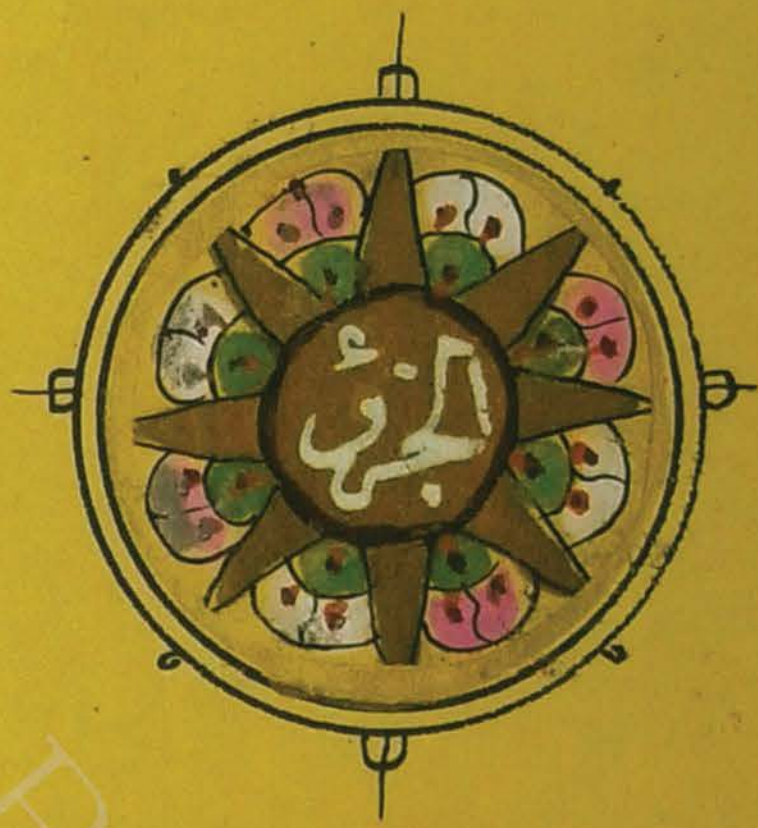
Then, We sent after them Our Messengers, and We sent Jesus, — son of Mary, and gave him the *Injeel* (Gospel). And We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him, compassion and mercy. But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please Allah therewith, but that they did not observe it with the right observance. So, We gave those among them who believed, their (due) reward; but many of them are rebellious.

O you who believe [in Moses (i.e. Jews) and Jesus (i.e. Christians)]! Fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk (straight). And He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

So that the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) may know that they have no power whatsoever over the Grace of Allah, and that (His) Grace is (entirely) in His Hand to bestow it on whomsoever He wills. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty."

Surah al-Hadeed (The Iron) 57: 25-29.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرْدُّوكُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ بَلِ اللَّهُ مُوَلِّيكُمْ
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
سُلْطَانًا وَمَا فِيهِمْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ
وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحْسُونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرَيْكُمْ مَا يَحْبُبُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ يُرِيدُ
الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ
عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو
الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ تَصْعَدُونَ وَلَا تَلَوْنِ
عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي
أَخْرِيكُمْ فَأَتَابِكُمْ غَمَاتٍ بِغَمَةٍ لِكَيْلَا
تُخْذَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ



إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ وَالْوَعَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ
 وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَا مُوسَى لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا خَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ إِلَّا
 مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي
 جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضًا مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ
 وَحَدُّوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلُمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الْمُفْسِدِينَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا
 عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ عَمَدَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا
 النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْعِدْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ
 وَحَسْبَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِبِ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ وَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ۝ حِينَ إِذَا
 أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ
 سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ
 أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَتِي وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ

At over 700 years old, this late 13th century Qur'an from Syria or possibly Egypt is written in elegant *muhaqqaq* script with surah headers copied in *thuluth* using red ink. This impressive Qur'an was written by a master calligrapher on thick, high quality hand made paper and measures 36cm by 25cm. The Qur'an contains 280 pages with thirteen lines of text per page. Over time some of the leaves have been damaged at the corners so have undergone repair work. Individual verses are not numbered; three simple red dots are used to indicate the end of each verse. The red text on the left hand page written sideways in the margin indicates the end of the surah's first section. The pages show the end of Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets, 26) and the start of Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27).

يَلْقَوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ كَاذِبُونَ وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ أَلَمْ تَرَ
 أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ غَدِمَا
 ظَلَمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ

سُورَةُ التَّمِيمِ طَبَقٌ وَعَشْرُونَ آيَةً

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 طَسَّيْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ هُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ
 يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ
 سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ الْخَسِرُونَ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلْقَى الْقُرْآنَ
 مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِهَيْلِهِ إِنِّي أَنَسْتُ نَارًا سَاءَتِ كَلِمَتُهَا
 حِينَ أَوَّلَتْكُمْ نِشَابٍ قَبَسَ لَكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا فُزِّي
 أَنْبُورًا مَرِيءًا فِي النَّارِ وَمِنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ يَا أَيُّهَا

سُورَةُ النَّصْرِ ثَلَاثُ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

سُورَةُ أَبِي هَبٍ خَمْسُ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَتْ سَيْيُطَاهُ
فَإِذَا تَلَّوْا فَلْيَافِكُوا وَفِي جَدِّهَا حَلْدٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ

سُورَةُ الْاِخْلَاصِ ثَلَاثُ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
سُورَةُ الْفَلَقِ ثَمَانِ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ
وَالنَّاسِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ
وَالنَّاسِ



Above

Further pages from Exhibition Islam's Mamluk Qur'an showing Surah an-Nasr (The Help, 110), al-Masadd (The Palm Fibre, 111), al-Ikhlaas (The Purity, 112), al-Falaq (The Daybreak, 113) and an-Naas (Mankind, 114). The manuscript has one large decorated roundel on the last page and was most probably copied for a mosque or someone of wealth.

Opposite page

One of the most powerful verses of the entire Qur'an known as *Ayatul Kursi* (The verse of the chair or footstool) in Surah al-Baqarah describing the Creator in all of His Magnificence and Glory. "Allah! La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), Al-Hayyul-Qayyum (the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists). Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never encompass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great." Surah al-Baqarah, (The Heifer) 2: 255.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْوَيْلَ وَمَا يُبْدِيهِ
وَلَا حُلَّةَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
تَوَلَّيْنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامِ
فِيهِ وَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْغَايِبِ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْوَيْلَ وَمَا يُبْدِيهِ
وَلَا حُلَّةَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
تَوَلَّيْنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامِ
فِيهِ وَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْغَايِبِ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْوَيْلَ وَمَا يُبْدِيهِ
وَلَا حُلَّةَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
تَوَلَّيْنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامِ
فِيهِ وَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْغَايِبِ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ

A small 10th century Qur'an from Syria or Iraq written in *archaic naskh* script using black ink. This compact Qur'an is one of the oldest complete extant manuscripts in Exhibition Islam's Collection. The Qur'an consists of 300 pages and is only 8cm long and 4cm wide. Surah headers are written in a larger cursive style script in white within a gold panel. There are fifteen lines of densely packed script per page within a light frame. The text is fully vocalised in black. Tear drop motifs in the margins indicate the end of every fifth verse and gold roundels made up of concentric circles mark every ten verses. Individual verses are separated by simple circles. The Qur'an is leather bound and embossed with a number of decorative emblems. The pages show the last part of Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets, 26) and the start of Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27).



ان يعلمه علماني استريل ولو ترانا على بعض الامم
 ففقدوا عليهم ما كانوا به مؤمنين له بالسلامة
 المجرمين لا يؤمنون به حتى يروا العذاب الاليم فاما
 نعتهم وهم لا يشعرون فيقولوا هل نحن مستطرون
 يستعملون افرايت ان متعناهم سنين طامس
 يوعدون ما لقى عنهم ما كانوا يمتنعون وما اكلوا
 من قرية الا لها مندرون ذكرى وما كنا ظالمين
 وما تولى الشياطين وما يغي لهم وما يشعرون
 اهنم عن النعم لغفولون فلا تدع مع الله الها اخر
 قلوب من المعدين انذروا عيسى بن مريم والذين
 جاحل لمن اتبعك من المؤمنين فان عصول قلالي
 بما تعلمون وتوكل على العزيز الرحيم الذي يزل
 حين تقوم وتقلبك في الناجدين انه هو السميع العليم
 هل انبىكم على من تنزل الشياطين تنزل على كل
 اثم يلقون السع والثهم كاذبون والشعرا يستع



لَحْ يَدْكِهِ وَقَالَ سَحْدًا وَف
 حُورٍ فَاخَذَهُ وَحُودَهُ
 فَسَدَ بَصَرُهُ بِالْبَصْرِ وَصَوَّمَا
 عَمَّ وَفَعَّ عَادَ مَا دَا سَلِمَا
 عَلِيَّكَ مَا لَكَ يَدُ الْعَفِيفِ مَا
 لَكَ مَرَّ سَحَّ مَا لَكَ عَلَيْهِ الْإِخْلَافُ
 عِيَالُكَ مِمَّنْ وَفَعَّ يَمُودَ مَا دَا
 فَلَ لَصَفِّ يَصْعَوْنَ مَا حَجَّ خَيْرُ مَعِي
 أَعْرَامُ مَا دَا بَصَرُ فَاخَذَ بَصَرُ
 الصَّعْفَةِ وَصَفِّ سَطَدَ وَرَفَعَا

A hand written *kufic* leaf and its reverse side originating in the Middle East, 13th century. By this period, *kufic* script had been largely replaced by more cursive styles of writing, so examples of *kufic* Qur'anic manuscripts produced during this period are rare. The calligrapher has only made use of very sparse vocalisation in red ink even though the Qur'anic marking system was in wide use by the 13th century.

The image on the opposite page shows Surah adh-Dhaariyaat (The Winds that Scatter, 51) starting from verse 32 and ending with the first three letters of verse 45 on this page.

قالوا انا ناد سلينا الخ قوم
 محمد من ليد سل علينا حنا
 ده من طير مسومه عند
 دنك للمسد من فاحد حنا
 من كار فيها من القوم مسرفعا
 وحدنا فيها عند سيد من
 المسلمون ويدكنا فيها ناه
 للدين حنا قور العبد ناه
 لاليف ووق موصع ماد ناه
 الخ مد عور سلطير مسرفعو

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين
والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين
الطاهرين

نفاذی
سوالشویو نلش
مرا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عشق کذلک یوحی الیک والی الدین
ط

The Final Revelation from Allah

As the Qur'an represents the final revelation from Allah to all of humanity, it is the most comprehensive and detailed of the Divinely revealed books which Allah chose to send to mankind. The Qur'an has therefore replaced all of the previous Divinely revealed books as it is a message from Allah to all of humanity rather than to a specific set of people such as the Children of Israel. As discussed, the contents of previously revealed books such as the *Taurat* of Moses, *Zabur* of David and the *Injeel* of Jesus (peace be upon them) have been altered by mankind over the ages, so Allah has superseded these with the Qur'an. The replacement of these earlier books was clearly stated by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

"In place of the Taurat I have been given the seven long Surahs (chapters); in place of the Zabur I have been given the Surahs of one hundred ayahs (verses); in place of the Injeel I have been given the seven repeatedly-recited verses (al-Fatihah), and in addition I have been given the mufasaal Surahs (i.e. from chapter Qaf until the end of the Qur'an)."

Narrated by Tabaraani in al-Kabeer.¹

The greatness of the Qur'an rests in the fact that it is Allah's Speech and as such is full of eloquence, beauty and purity. Moreover, as we shall examine later, it defies mankind's ability to produce anything similar to it. As the Qur'an is the greatest of all of the Divinely revealed books it naturally contains within it, a complete way of life and guidance for all of humanity. Allah often uses examples in the Qur'an to convey ideas and concepts to man. The magnificence of the Qur'an is explained by Allah stating that if the Qur'an was sent down upon a mountain, the mountain would be moved or crumble under the sheer power of such a mighty revelation.

"Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rent asunder by the fear of Allah."

Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect."

Surah al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 21.

With regards to the above verse, the 14th century Islamic scholar Ibn Kathir wrote in his famous commentary² on the Qur'an;

"Allah the Exalted emphasizes the greatness of the Qur'an, its high status and of being worthy of making hearts humble and rent asunder upon hearing it, because of the true promises and sure threats that it contains, **'Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rent asunder by the fear of Allah.'**"

If this is the case with a mountain which is hard and huge, that if it was made able to comprehend and understand this Qur'an, it would feel humble and crumble from fear of Allah the Exalted, then what about you - O mankind why do your hearts not feel softness and humbleness from the fear of Allah, even though you understand Allah's command and comprehend His Book. This is why Allah said, **'Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect.'**"



Opposite

The start of Surah ash-Shooraa (The Consultation, 42) from volume twenty five of a 19th century Ottoman Qur'an.

The Qur'an is often subdivided into 30 equal volumes or *juz'* for ease of recitation and memorisation. The page is written in *naskh* script within a gold coloured rectangular border. Surah headers have been written in *thuluth* script on gold ground within a blue frame.



Above

A magnificent Qur'an scroll written in large *thuluth* script during the early part of the 20th century measuring 300 cm long by 25 cm wide. The text is from the verse of the chair or footstool (*Ayatul Kursi*). The word 'Allah' is written in black within a separate compartment on gold ground.

Opposite page

Thirteen lines of fine black *muhaqqaq* calligraphy with the first, middle and last lines written in a larger variant of *thuluth* script, from the early Ottoman period dated to around the 15/16th century. Each section of *muhaqqaq* text is bordered by exquisitely designed floral panels on either side. The text is fully vocalised with individual verses separated by floret shapes. There are no marginal ornaments to indicate the number of verses. The image shows Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) starting with part of verse 185 to verse 188. Location: Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.

The following verse further emphasizes the point that Allah makes. If any Divine revelation could move a mountain, or could make the Earth cleave asunder or make the dead speak, then it would be the Qur'an; such is the power and greatness of the revelation of the Qur'an:

"And if there had been a Qur'an with which mountains could be moved (from their places), or the Earth could be cloven asunder, or the dead could be made to speak (it would not have been other than this Qur'an). But the decision of all things is certainly with Allah."

Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 31.

Reflecting on this verse Ibn Kathir says:

"Allah praises the Qur'an which He has revealed to Muhammad ﷺ and prefers it to all other Divinely revealed Books before it, **'And if there had been a Qur'an with which mountains could be moved.'**

Allah says, **'If there were a Book among the previous Divine Books with which the mountains could be moved from their places, or the Earth could be cleaved asunder, or the dead speak in their graves, it would have been this Qur'an and none else.'** Or, this Qur'an is more worthy to cause all this, because of its marvellous eloquence that defies the ability of mankind and the *jinns*, even if all of them gather their forces together to invent something like it or even a surah like it."

The greatness, beauty, eloquence and purity of the Qur'an is such that enormous mountains can be moved and crumble in submission to Allah, the Creator of all that exists. Mountains, as we know today, are immense objects that can extend deep underground serving like giant pegs to stabilise the Earth's crust. Yet if they can be humbled before Allah, then how is it that man, who is relatively insignificant in size and form, can be so proud and arrogant to reject the message of the Qur'an?

Revelation during Ramadan

The month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar is intimately tied to the Qur'an in numerous ways. Most significant of all is that Allah chose to reveal all of the previous Divine books that we are aware of during the month of Ramadan; and the Qur'an is no exception. Regarding this phenomena Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"The Suhuf of Ibraheem (Abraham) were revealed on the first night of Ramadan. The Taurat was revealed on the sixth of Ramadan. The Injeel was revealed on the thirteenth of Ramadan. The Zabur were revealed on the eighteenth of Ramadan. And the Qur'an was revealed on the twenty-fourth of Ramadan."

Narrated by Tabaraani in al-Kabeer.³

وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرْضِيًّا وَعَلَى سِفْرِ فَعْدَةٍ

مِنْ آيَاتِ الْحُرِيِّ وَالْإِسْرَافِ وَالْإِسْرَافِ وَالْإِسْرَافِ وَالْإِسْرَافِ
الْعِدَّةَ وَلَيْسَ كَبْرُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا هَدَيْكُمْ وَلَعَدَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ اجِيبْ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِالْعَهْدِ الَّذِي بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ لَا يَكْفُرُوا بِالْعَهْدِ الَّذِي بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ
هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلَّمَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ كُفْرًا تَحْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

فَنَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَى عَنْكُمْ فَاَلَا

بِأَشْرُوهُنَّ وَانْتَعَمُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى
يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُوا الصِّيَامَ
إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تَبْأَشِرُوا هُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ
اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْتَرِبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِيَاسِ الْعَالَمِينَ تَقُونَ
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِيَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا

مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِإِلَافَةٍ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



An 18th century Ottoman Qur'anic commentary of Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights, 7) in scroll form decorated with foliate designs. The 'Bismillah' (In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful) is written using *diwani* script. *Diwani* was a specialist Ottoman font used extensively by scribes in the Ottoman chancery for official documents. The main text is written in *riqa* with large lines of *thuluth* on the sides. Unusually, the scroll decoration is seemingly incomplete as the floral design in the top right corner has not been coloured in.

Allah's promise to preserve the Qur'an

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as the final Messenger and Prophet sent by Allah, taught humanity to believe in Allah alone as the One True God, to worship Him Alone, and to enjoin good and forbid evil. As the final Divine revelation, Allah mentions that the Qur'an was sent down in truth in the following verses:

"And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture (Books) that came before it and trustworthy in highness and a witness over it (old Scriptures).

So judge among them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.

If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ.

And so judge (you O Muhammad ﷺ) among them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you (O Muhammad ﷺ) far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you.

And if they turn away, then know that Allah's Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And truly, most of men are rebellious and disobedient (to Allah)."

Surah al-Maaidah (The Table Spread) 5: 48–49.

To guard this eternal truth from corruption, Allah has also promised humanity that He (Allah) would protect and preserve the Qur'an in its original Divinely revealed form. The Qur'an could not be changed as it was to remain the final message from Allah to humanity until the end of time.

"Verily, We, it is We Who have revealed the reminder (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely We will guard it (from corruption)."

Surah al-Hijr (The Stoneland) 15: 9.

The Muslims only follow the Qur'an

A question that often arises is why don't Muslims accept the previously revealed books that are present nowadays. In response to this, it is important to stress that Muslims follow Islamic Monotheism and so are required to follow only the Qur'an and the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. As far as the previous books are concerned, they no longer represent their original true forms. Muslims believe that they were sent down by Allah and at one time they were correct, but as discussed previously, during the course of history they have been altered by mankind. This is the reason Muslims do not follow these previous Divinely revealed books. Only the Qur'an remains unchanged and protected by Allah.

Additionally, there is no need to follow the previous books as the Qur'an has been sent to all of mankind rather than just a specific nation, so it has abrogated these books. Hence, the Qur'an presents a complete way of life that covers all of the teachings in the previous books and much more.

Opposite

A single volume Qur'an dated 1075 AH (1697 CE) hand written in plain *naskh* style script from Syria showing the opening verses of Surah Qaf (50). The text is written within a simple red and green border with surah headers written in red ink. Three apostrophe-like markings in red ink have been used to indicate the verse endings.

The names of the Qur'an

The Qur'anic revelation is of such magnitude that just one or two epithets alone cannot describe it. We begin to gain an understanding of its depth of knowledge and beauty of expression by a variety of descriptive names that are to be found within the Qur'an itself. For instance, *Noor* (light), *Huda* (guidance), *Rahma* (mercy), *Majeed* (glorious), *Mubarak* (blessed), *Bashir* (announcer) and *Nadhir* (warner) are some of the words used to describe the Qur'an. However, the most commonly used names for the Qur'an are:

1. Qur'an (Recitation)

The name *Qur'an* is the most commonly used name and it is mentioned seventy-three times within the Qur'an itself. The Arabic word *Qur'an* is derived from the root *Qara'a*, which has various meanings, such as to read and to recite. *Qur'an* is a verbal noun and hence means the 'reading' or 'recitation'. The name *Qur'an* also signifies memorisation; and history shows that the Qur'an has been preserved through memorisation and writing. In one verse of the Qur'an Allah says:

"Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand."

Surah Yusuf (Joseph) 12: 2.

2. Kitaab (Book)

The Qur'an is also known as the *Kitaab*. The name *Kitaab* refers to written text and comes from the root word *Katb*, which means to bring pieces (e.g. letters) together. Allah says:

"This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt..."

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 2.

3. Furqaan (Criterion)

The name '*Furqaan*' meaning the 'Criterion' is mentioned four times in the Qur'an. This refers to the fact that the Qur'an is the criterion between *Tawheed* (monotheism; The Oneness of Allah) and *shirk* (polytheism; associating partners with Allah), and the criterion between truth and falsehood as well as good and evil.

The name *Furqaan* is used for one of the surahs of the Qur'an and contains the following description;

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an) to His slave (Muhammad ﷺ) that he may be a warner to the *Alamin* (mankind and jinn)."

Surah al-Furqaan (The Criterion) 25: 1.

4. Dhikr (Remembrance or Narrative)

The Qur'an is referred to as *Dhikr* because it acts as a guidance and remembrance of the purpose of life. The Qur'an describes the purpose of the entire creation, the history of previous nations as well as including descriptions of heaven and hell. Allah Says:

"And this is a blessed Reminder (the Qur'an) which We have sent down; will you then (dare to) deny it?"

Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets) 21: 50.

5. Tanzeel (Revelation)

The Qur'an is the *Tanzeel* because it is a revelation sent down by Allah to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so that he could guide humanity. For example, Allah mentions the name *Tanzeel* in the following verse:

"And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds (mankind, jinn and all that exists)"

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 192.

The name *Tanzeel* (revelation) describes the true eminence and stature of the Qur'an. It is indeed a revelation from Allah and not just some story or a poem about the days of old.

تَعْمَلُونَ كَدَّ
مُهَيَّجَةٍ

أَنْ هَذَا يَكُنْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ إِنْ اللَّهُ يَشَاءُ لَنُصِصَنَّ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ لِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ بَلْ عَجَبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ
ثَرَاءً نَادَاكَ رَبُّكَ يَبْعِدْ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ
وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ
فِي أَمْرٍ مُرْتَجٍ أَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ
بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ وَالْأَرْضِ مَدَدْنَاهَا
وَالْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ نَخِيلٍ
تَبَصَّرَةٌ وَذَكَرَى لَلْأَعْيُنِ عَذَابٌ مُبِينٌ وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ

لَا أَنْ أَيْ كَثِيرٌ
ذَكَرَ فِي الرَّعْدِ
مِنْ بَشَرِكَا

Opposite top

A complete 18th century Ottoman manuscript with about 300 folios, showing the last few surah's. It is written by a neat hand in fine black *naskh* script with some red vowel marks. Individual verses are separated by gold circles. The pages have a gold frame border that has eroded away leaving a green residue. The colour may be the result of copper salts within the ink that have oxidised to form green copper oxide.

Opposite bottom

A page from a complete Qur'an commentary written in the 17th century. Arabic verses are in *naskh* with commentary of Surah Ibraheem (Abraham 14, verse 24) written in *riqa* script. The margins have been decorated using acidic ink which has caused the paper to split over time.

The Qur'an is the Speech of Allah

A special characteristic of the Qur'an is that it is the actual speech of Allah which was revealed to the Blessed Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Arabic. However, it is important to note that Allah's speech is infinite and not limited to or by any single language. Allah in fact has infinite power and ability to speak in any language. For instance, Allah spoke to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in Hebrew. With regards to the Qur'an being the Speech of Allah, Muhammad Abd al-Adheem az Zarqaanee in his book *Manaahil al-Irfaan fi Uloom al-Qur'an*, gives one of the most precise definitions of the Qur'an:

"The Qur'an is the Arabic Speech (*kalaam*) of Allah, which He (Allah) revealed to Muhammad ﷺ in words and meaning, and which has been preserved in the written copies and has reached us by *mutawaatir* (reported by a large number of people such that they cannot be mistaken or forge a lie, therefore it is authentic) transmissions, and is a challenge to mankind to produce something similar to it." ⁴ In the Qur'an, Allah also says:

"And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words (*kalaam*) of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."

Surah Luqmaan 31: 27.

This verse has also been explained by Ibn Kathir in his commentary of the Noble Qur'an in the following way:

"Allah says that even if those oceans were ink for the Words of Allah, and all the trees were pens, the pens would be broken and the water of the sea would run dry, and the Words of Allah would remain, for nothing can outlast them. For no one can comprehend the greatness of Allah or praise Him as He deserves to be praised, except the One Who praises Himself. Our Lord is as He says He is and He is beyond what we can say."

It is important to bear in mind that Allah speaks in a majesty and manner that befits His Greatness. Allah's speech is known to be the Most Powerful, full of Justice and Wisdom. The Qur'an as His Speech is mentioned in the following verses. Allah first outlines some of the many signs that we see created by Allah in the world, and then asks, whether people believe in the Speech of Allah or something else? He also questions which speech other than His, people will believe in:

"The revelation of the Book (this Qur'an) is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. Verily, in the heavens and the Earth are signs for the believers. And in your creation, and what He scattered (through the Earth) of moving (living) creatures are signs for people who have faith with certainty."

And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision (rain) that Allah sends down from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the turning about of the winds (i.e. sometimes towards the east or north, and sometimes towards the south or west sometimes bringing glad tidings of rain and sometimes bringing the torment), are signs for a people who understand."

These are the *ayat* (verses) of Allah, which We recite to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) with truth."

Then in which speech after Allah and His *ayat* will they believe?"

Surah al-Jaathiyah (The Kneeling) 45: 2-6.

With regard to these verses, Ibn Kathir comments:

"Allah directs His servants to contemplate His favours and gifts, as well as His great power that is demonstrated by His creating the heavens and the Earth and the various types and categories of creatures in them."



Qur'an pages dated to around the 18th century from the Middle East. The text is elegantly inscribed with large *naskh* type script on paper with some illumination in places. The page on the right starts with part of verse 25 from Surah Ibraheem (Abraham, 14) finishing on part of verse 36 on the left.

Opposite page

A rare Bosnian Qur'an from the 18th century written in fine *naskh* script on machine made paper with the pages open on the last few surahs. The Qur'an has simple red borders on each page with surah titles written in red ink.

مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمَ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا
خِلَالَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ
الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ
الْفَلَكَ لَتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ
لَكُمْ الْأَنْهَارَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبِينَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
وَأَتَيْنَكُم مِّنْ كُلِّ مَاءٍ لَّتَوَدَّ أَنْ
تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّ
الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ وَإِذْ قَالَ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا
وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَسْنَامَ
رَبِّ إِنَّمَا أَضَلَّتْ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ

قوله

The night and day alternate, each follows the other in succession, never ceasing to come, as decreed. One brings darkness and one brings light. Allah the Exalted also sends down the rain from the clouds when it is most needed. He is calling the rain, 'provision', because it is the resource that produces various provisions, **'and revives therewith the earth after its death,'** after it was dry and had no vegetation or life of any kind.

Allah said next, **'and in the turning about of the winds,'** sometimes towards the south and sometimes towards the north. Some are easterly winds and some are westerly winds, some bringing sea breezes and some blow from the land, some coming at night and some by day. Some winds bring rain, some cause pollination and some winds just revive the soul, while some others bear no benefit.

'These are the ayat (verses) of Allah' - in reference to the Qur'an with the proofs and evidences that it contains, **'which We recite to you with truth'** for they contain the truth from the Truth (i.e. Allah).

Therefore, if they do not believe in Allah's signs nor abide by them, what speech after Allah and His signs will they then believe in?" ⁵

لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ
خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ نَجِسَتْ مِمَّنْ
فَوْقَ الْأَرْضِ مَالًا مِّنْ قَرَارٍ ثَبَتَ
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ
اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ
أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَلُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ
كُفْرًا وَآخَلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ
جَهَنَّمَ يَصَلُّونَهَا وَنَسَّ الْقَارُونَ
جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ إِندَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
قُلْ تَتَّبِعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ
قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً

The Speech of Allah is eternal

Speech is one of the known attributes of Allah that is revealed in the Qur'an. Hence, Allah's Speech, like the rest of Allah's Names and Attributes, does not resemble anything in creation. All of His Names and Attributes are eternal and befit the Majesty of Allah and this is also true of the Speech of Allah. It is unique and perfect in every way. As Allah's Names and Attributes are unique, mankind has not been given the mental capacity to fully comprehend the exact nature of Allah's Names and Attributes. Allah's magnificent and beautiful Names and Attributes are mentioned in the following verses:

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them..."

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 180.

"There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."

Surah ash-Shooraa (The Consultation) 42: 11.

هو يد للمضلين الذين هم عن سائرهم ساهون
الذين هم يراون ومنعوا السوف

سورة النور هي ايات من كتابه

انا اعطيتك الصلوة فصل لربك
واخر ان سمانك هو الابتر

سورة البقرة من ست ايات

قل يا ايها الكافرون لا اعبدكم اعبدوا الله
ولا انتم عابدون ما لم يحكم ولا انا عابد ما
عبدتم لا انتم عابدون ما عبدكم عبدكم الله
ولي يمينه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله والفتح ورايت الناس يدخلون
في الدين فاولوا ففتح بفتح ريك واستغفره انه

كان توابا وهي خمس ايات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
تبدل اي لهيب وتب ما اغني عنه ماله

وما كسب سيصلي نارا ذاه لهيب

والله اعلم بحالة الخطب في جدها حبل من مسد

سورة الاحلام من شريف ثلاث ايات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قل هو الله احد الله الصمد له يلد
له يولد وله يكن له كفوا احد



The opening pages from the famous Sultan Baybars' Qur'an containing the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) superbly written in gold *thuluth* script surrounded by extensive geometric design work. This splendid Qur'an currently held at the British Library London, is the earliest dated Qur'an of the Mamluk period and was written during the years 1304 and 1306 CE. The text of the opening surah is spread over two pages, a practice that became normal in later Mamluk Qur'ans. There are decorative medallions at the centre of each panel and a hasp in the centre of the page.

Although we cannot understand the precise nature of Allah's Names and Attributes, we can understand their significance. For example, we know that Allah is alive (*Hayy*) but we also know that His is not the kind of existence that we experience ourselves. Our lives are controlled by Allah, and are terminated through death, whereas Allah is not restricted or limited by anything. Allah also has the power to give life to His creation, but we cannot do the same. Therefore, whilst we can understand that Allah has a Name or Attribute we cannot comprehend its reality with regards to Allah.

Similarly, we know Allah speaks in a manner which befits His Majesty. Allah mentions His Speech in many verses of the Qur'an. For example, Allah says that He spoke directly to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in the following verses:

"...And to Musa (Moses) Allah spoke directly."

Surah an-Nisa (The Women) 4: 164.

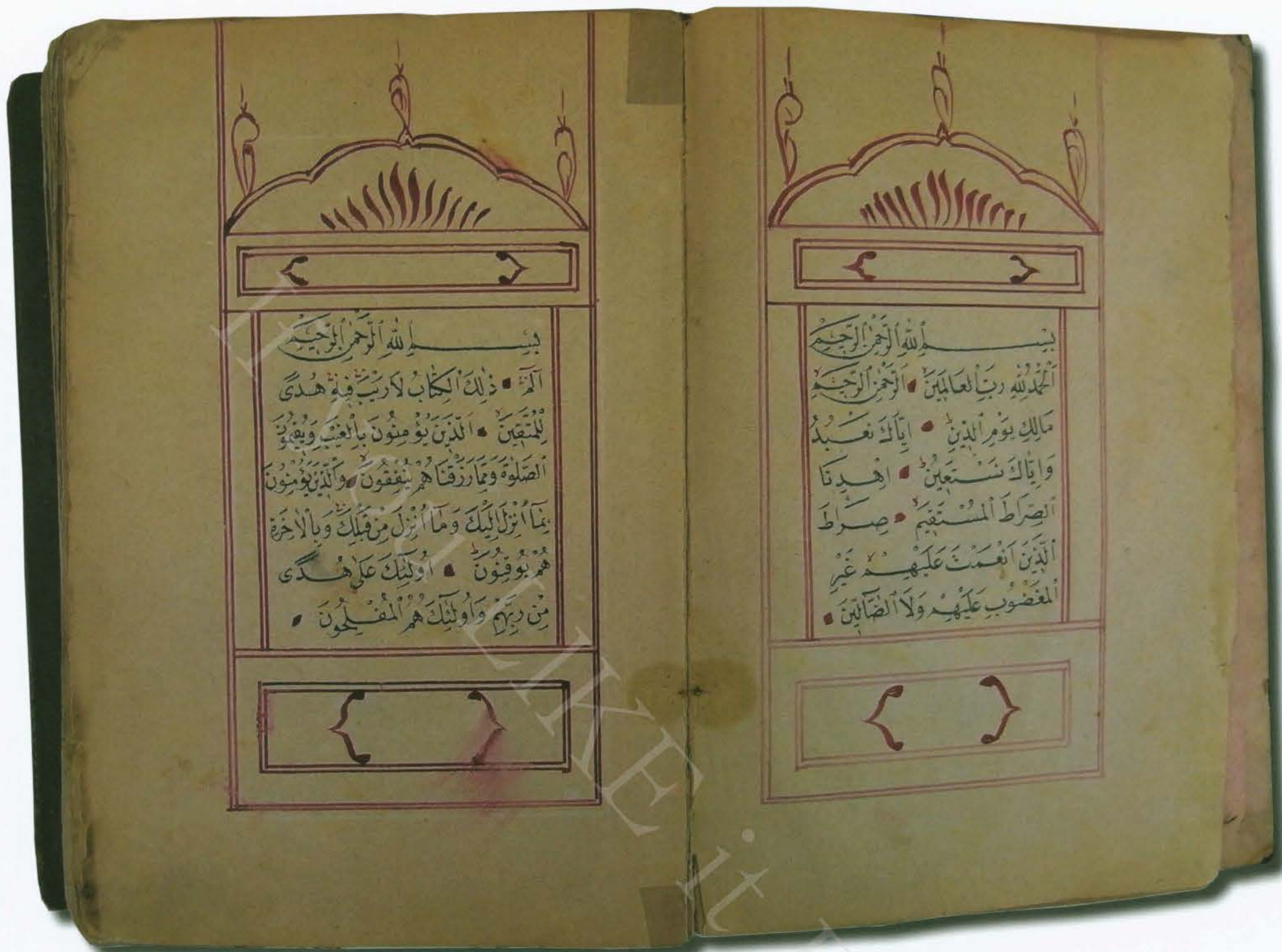
"And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice."

Surah al-An'aam (The Cattle) 6: 115.

We are also informed in the Qur'an that Allah's speech is not created:

"Surely, His is the creation and commandment. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the *Alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!"

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 54.



In this verse of the Qur'an, Allah distinguishes between the creation and the command which is the Speech of Allah. The Speech of Allah causes the creation to come into being:

"Verily, Our Word (Command) to a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it: "Be!" – and it is."

Surah an-Nahl (The Bee) 16: 40.

This verse has been explained by Ibn Kathir as follows: "...meaning, We (Allah) issue the command once, and then it happens. Allah does not need to repeat or confirm whatever He commands, because there is nothing that can stop Him or oppose Him. He is the One, the Compelling, the Almighty; whose Power, Might and Dominion have subjected all things. None has the right to be worshipped except Him, and there is no Lord other than Him."

We understand from this that it is the Speech of Allah which causes the creation to come into being. Therefore, the Speech of Allah cannot be created. In the following statement Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told people to seek refuge in the Speech of Allah from all types of evil. Refuge is sought from the Creator against the creation. If refuge is sought using the Speech of Allah, then His Speech is not created. If the Speech of Allah were created it would have a beginning, but the attributes of Allah do not change and are eternal.

"Whoever dismounts at any place, and says, 'I seek refuge in the kalimaat (speech) of Allah from the evil that is created', nothing will harm him until he moves from his stop."

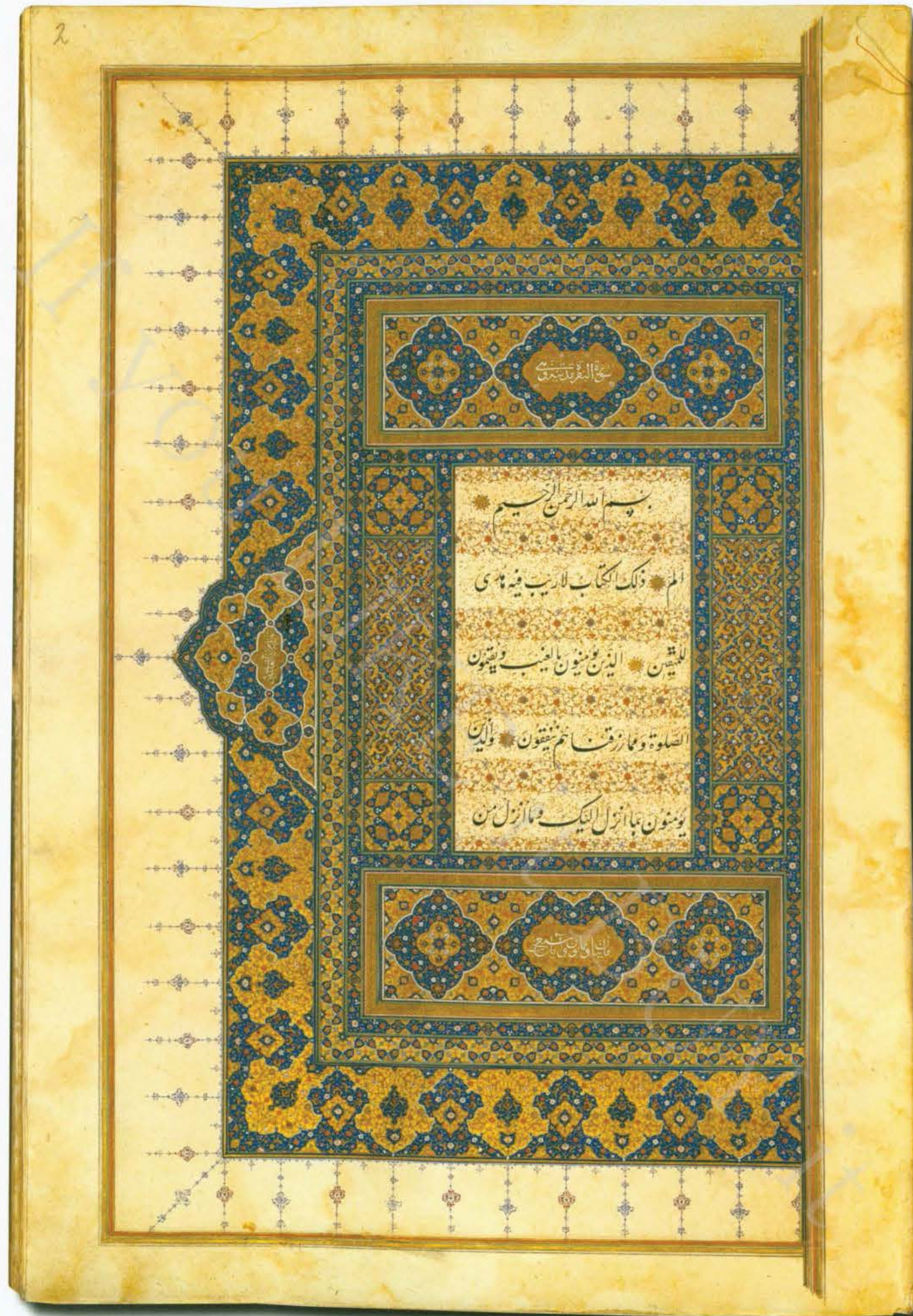
Reported by Muslim.

A fine example of a small Ottoman provincial Qur'an, 18th century. The pages are open on Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the first few verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2). Very sparsely decorated with simple use of red ink and neatly written in naskh script.

لَا أَدْرِمُ فَسَجَدُ وَإِلَّا ابْلِيسُ أُنِي نَقَلْنَا
 يَأْذَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَذْرُوكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ
 فَلَا يُخْرِجُ جَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى
 إِنَّ لَكَ الْأَتْجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى
 وَأَنْتَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَى
 فَوَسَّوْا لِلَّهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَأْذَمُ
 هَلْ دُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَا
 يَبْلَى ۖ فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا
 سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفْنَ عَلَيْهِمَا
 مِنْ دَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ
 فَغَوَى ۖ ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ قَتَابَ

عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَى ۖ قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا
 جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا
 يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى ۖ فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ
 فَلَا يَضِلْ وَلَا يَشْقَى ۖ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ
 عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا
 وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى ۖ قَالَ
 رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ
 بَصِيرًا ۖ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا
 فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى ۖ
 وَكَذَلِكَ نُجْزِي مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ
 يُؤْمِنْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ

A small Ottoman Qur'an page and its reverse side, 18th century. Hand written in neat *naskh* script with gold coloured markers acting as verse separators. Vowels are penned in black ink with limited use of red. There are eleven lines of text to the page set within a line-framed border. The page on the right starts on part of verse 116 of Surah TaaHaa (20) and ends on the left folio, part of the way through verse 127.



Ornate Qur'an page from the 17th century written in *nasta'liq* script. The start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) is shown. Use of *nasta'liq* for writing Qur'ans is very rare, as this tended to be reserved for interlinear translations and marginal commentary. The page is split into a number of panels and intricately decorated using an array of colours and geometric interwoven designs with blue finials extended into the margin on three sides. Individual verses are separated by simple floral shapes. The surah title and footer text are written in white *thuluth*. Location: Topkapi Museum, Istanbul.

أَنْ تَقْذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْقُذُوا لِيُشْفِقَ
 إِلَهُ سُلْطَانٍ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
 شُورًا مِنْ نَارٍ وَنَحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُونَ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 بَيِّنَاتٌ • فَإِذَا انْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ
 • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ
 إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • يَعْرِفُ الْجَاهِلُونَ
 بِسْمِئِهِمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ • يَطُوفُونَ فِيهَا
 وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • وَلَمْ تُخَفِّمْ مَقَامَ
 رَبِّ جَهَنَّمَ • فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
 فَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • فِيهَا عَيْنَانِ خَضِرَتَانِ • فَيَا
 أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ صَافٍ مُنْقَظٍ • فَيَا
 أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَيِّنَاتٌ • يَكْنُزُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتِهَا

Mid 19th century pages from an Ottoman Qur'an written in large *naskh* script. There are thirteen lines of text per page enclosed within a simple orange coloured rectangular frame with unusually large orange coloured circles separating the verses. The page on the right starts with part of verse 10 of Surah ar-Rahmaan (The Most Gracious, 55) and ends on part of verse 54 on this page.

وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ • فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكَامِ •
 وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ • فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ
 خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ • وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ
 مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ • فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ
 وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ • فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • مَرَجَ
 الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ • بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ • فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا الْوُحُوشُ وَالْأَرْجَانُ • فَبِأَيِّ
 آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَاقِ
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ • وَيَبْقَى
 وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ • فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ
 لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • سَنَفَعُ لَكُمْ آيَةَ الْفُلَانِ •
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ • يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ اسْمِعُوا

Surah an-Nahl (The Bee, 16)
from a Qur'an beautifully
written in *naskh* script with
red *madda* signs and verse
separators, 18th century.
Detail view is shown on the
opposite page. The letter *ayn*
in red ink on the left hand
margin indicates the end
of the first section within
the surah. Note that the
first word (*wal-hameera*)
on the left hand page has
been repeated at the bottom
of the opposite page. This
functional placement acts as
an aid to allow continuous
recitation of the Qur'an as
the reader moves from page
to page.



Allah Says in the Qur'an:

"He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him)..."

Surah al-Hadeed (Iron) 57: 3.

All of Allah's attributes, including His Speech, are a part of Him, so we cannot say that they were created. In conclusion, the Speech of Allah is not created but an integral and eternal part of Him.

Allah's Speech is with sound

Allah speaks with sound that is audible and can be heard. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"When Allah decrees some order in the heaven, the angels flutter their wings indicating complete surrender to His saying which sounds like chains being dragged on rock. And when the state of fear disappears, they ask each other, 'What has your Lord ordered? They say that He has said that which is true and just, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.'"

Narrated by Abu Huraira, reported by Bukhari.

Further clear evidence that Allah speaks with sound is found in the following tradition of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

"On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will grasp the whole Earth and fold the heaven with his right hand, and then He will say, 'I am the King, where are the kings of the Earth.'"

Narrated by Ibn Umar, reported by Bukhari.

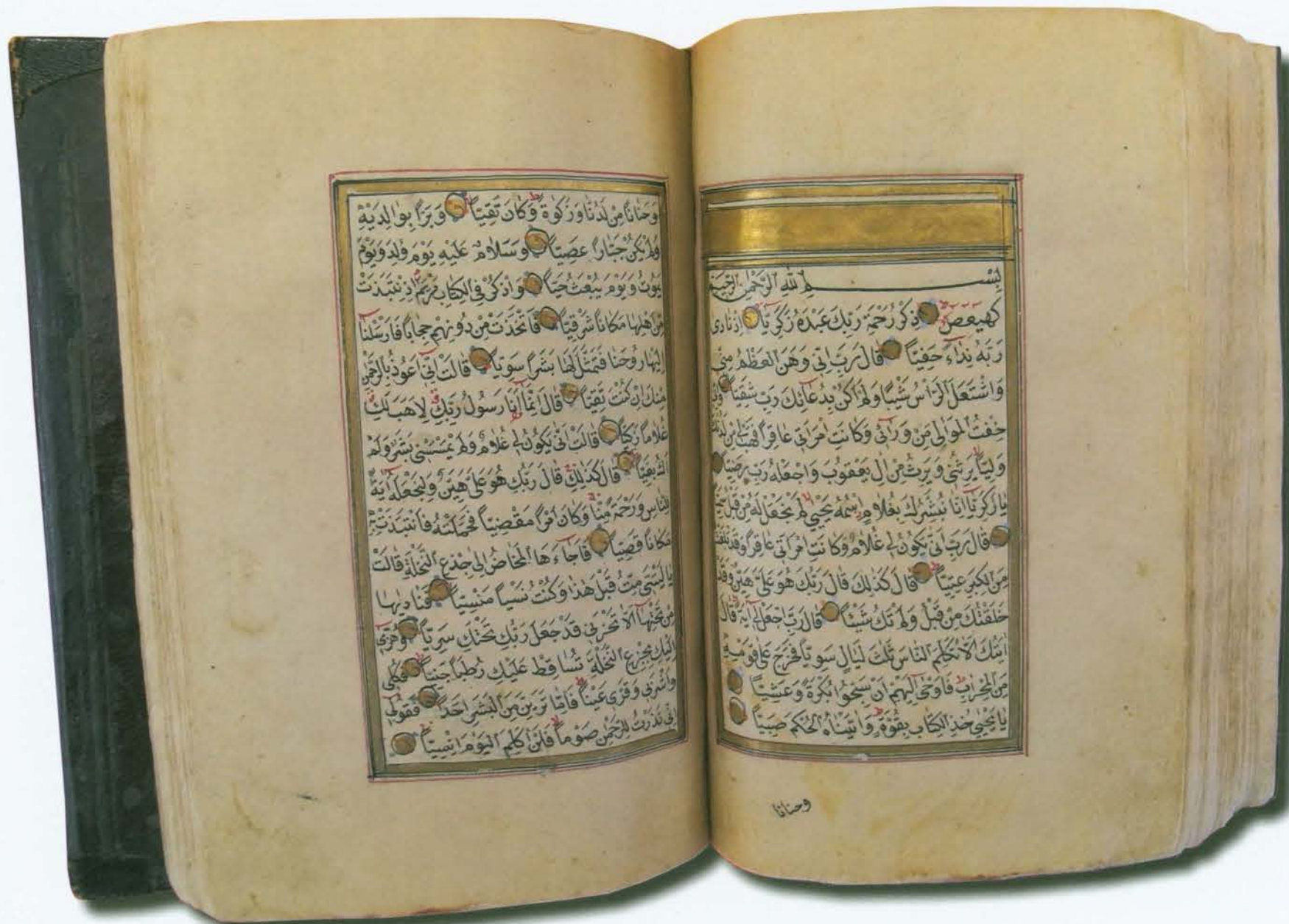
Again in this saying, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ tells us that Allah will speak to the creation on the Day of Resurrection, such that all of the creation can hear Him. This tradition of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is related in even more detail in the following saying when referring to the Day of Resurrection.

"... and their Lord will call them with a voice, the one who is close can hear it just as the one who is far can, and He (Allah) will say, 'I am the King' ..."

Reported by Ahmad & Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad.

The above saying clearly indicates that Allah will call with His Voice and people will hear the Words of their Lord.

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ كَنْزُهُ
 وَمَا يُمْسِكُ صَوْلِيُّهُ
 وَمَا يَكُنْ لَهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ
 فِي يَدَيْهِ يَوْمَ يُدْفَعُ
 الْكُفْرُ أَكْثَرًا مِنْ
 الْإِيمَانِ



Pages from a small Ottoman Qur'an, 19th century. Lightly decorated using fine gold borders with writing in elegant *naskh* script. The top and lower left images show pages open on Surah Maryam (Mary, 19). The lower right image shows part of Surah al-Kahf (The Cave, 18). The start of the sixteenth section or *juz'* is indicated by the large marginal device.



Allah's Speech consists of words and letters

The speech of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, consists of words and letters. An example of this is the following verse of the Qur'an:

"Qul hoowa Allaahu ahad..."

Surah al-Ikhlaas (Sincerity) 112: 1.

This verse in Arabic has four words and each word consists of a number of letters. Translated, this verse means: "Say (O Muhammad): "He is Allah, (the) One." Prophet Muhammad ﷺ highlighted that the Qur'an is composed of letters and words when he stated:

"Whoever recites one word from the Book of Allah will have ten rewards. And I do not say that Alif Laam Meem is (counted as) a word, but rather Alif is a word, and Laam is a word, and Meem is a word."

Reported by Bukhari.

Allah also mentions a word from Him (Allah) to the dwellers of Paradise when Allah says:

"(It will be said to them:) Salaam (peace be on you) – a Word from the Lord (Allah), Most Merciful."

Surah Yaaseen 36: 58.

In another verse Allah mentions that His word became uppermost over the word of the disbelievers, when Allah says:

"...the Word of Allah that became the uppermost; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."

Surah at-Tawbah (Repentance) 9: 40.

Qur'an leaves written in *tawqi'* script with arabesque patterns in pure gold ink, from the 15th century, late Mamluk period. An interlinear Persian translation is written in a smaller *nasta'liq* script. The acidity of the ink has resulted in the text on the reverse side bleeding through the page. There is a page missing from the centre of this section as the right hand side reads from Surah al-An'aam (The Cattle, 6) part of verse 73 to part of verse 74 and the left hand page starts from part of verse 80 to part of 81.

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ
 وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا
 الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ • وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْخَرَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي
 شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ • وَأَقِمُوا
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ •
 لَا تُحْسِبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ
 النَّارَ وَلَيْسَ الْبَصِيرُ • يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيْسَ أَمْرُكُمْ إِلَّا
 أَن تَأْمَنُوا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ آلِ الْفِرْعَوْنَ وَآلِ الْأَسَدِ
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ • يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيْسَ أَمْرُكُمْ إِلَّا أَن تَأْمَنُوا
 بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ آلِ الْفِرْعَوْنَ وَآلِ الْأَسَدِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ •
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيْسَ أَمْرُكُمْ إِلَّا أَن تَأْمَنُوا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ
 آلِ الْفِرْعَوْنَ وَآلِ الْأَسَدِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ •

The Message of the Qur'an

As Islam looks at life as a composite whole it is an essential requirement that life itself be regulated by a code of conduct. In basic terms, the Qur'an represents this code in the form of a comprehensive 'Book of Divine Guidance'; with its central message concentrating upon the meaning and purpose of life. As such, the Qur'an has the ability to resolve all of the problems that human kind has ever had, or will ever face. Furthermore, it answers the questions of life and death that emanates from the human mind through a variety of methods. The expressive language of the Qur'an is unique and contains power and magnificence combined with fluency, eloquence and purity that is unrivalled. The main theme running throughout the Qur'an is that of Monotheism, i.e. the Unity or Oneness of the Creator. Allah appeals to mankind's higher intellect and reasoning to comprehend His simple message of worshipping Allah alone without any partner.

Essentially, the Qur'an is a Book, without which mankind can never enjoy real peace, progress, material and spiritual advancement. Moral teachings are presented along with the realities of creation and the relationship between man and Creator. Guidance on all affairs, private or public, individual or collective, spiritual or material, national or international are given in such a beautiful style that has the power to bring those who recite and understand it to tears.

As Islam is a very meticulous faith, Muslims are encouraged to lead very self-disciplined and socially responsible lifestyles. The Qur'an therefore, provides the primary source for the *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law). History shows that Islamic scholars, jurists, judges, theologians, governors and also scientists have extracted their primary principles and directives from the Qur'an.

The Qur'an also explains that there is no compulsion in religion and deals with many aspects of life and death. It categorically lays down that all human beings are born innocent, but are accountable for their deeds. Due to this, Islam encourages righteousness and prohibits immorality and wickedness.

The Qur'an forbids the root causes of depravity such as intoxicants, usury, adultery and oppression. It also demarcates between the permissible (*halaal*) and the forbidden (*haraam*). Appropriate dietary guidelines, instructions on acceptable behavioural patterns and human, environmental and animal rights are also given.

As mentioned previously, Allah describes the Qur'an in many different ways. It is the 'light', which enables people to find their way out of ignorance, a 'healing' for it cures the ailments of the soul, a 'criterion' that distinguishes right from wrong, and a 'mercy' that guides mankind to happiness in this life and the next. Furthermore, Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a miracle revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, a miracle that has withstood the test of time. Ever since the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, it has remained unchanged and beyond corruption. Hence, there are no abridgements, re-writes or revisions of the Qur'an.

Moreover, the Qur'an has lived through the last one thousand four hundred years pouring out its message to all people of different abilities and levels. It has done so without losing even an iota of its perfect freshness and grace, and its skilful and comprehensible language is very much alive today in the hearts and minds of over a billion people.

Thus far, we have examined the need for messages from Allah by touching upon the previous Divinely revealed books and we have seen how the Qur'an is the final revelation that supersedes these earlier books. We have also mentioned how the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah and briefly outlined the message that it contains. The next chapters will discuss the wisdom behind the gradual revelation and the miraculous nature of the Arabic language contained within the Qur'an; and why it is impossible for humans to match it linguistically.

Opposite

A rare example of a simple Qur'an page in *naskh* script from Bulgaria written during the 18th century on thick paper. The faint vertical lines running through the page indicate that the paper is machine made. The page starts with verse 54 from Surah an-Noor (The Light, 24) and ends on verse 58.

الْيُسْرَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهْرِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهْرَ
 فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسِرَّ النَّفْسِ وَالْعَمَرَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
 مُّسَمًّى ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ
 بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
 الْبَاطِلُ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ۚ أَلَمْ تَرَ
 أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِعِزَّةِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ
 ۚ إِنَّ الْيَتِيمَ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَدِيدٍ ۚ
 وَإِذَا انقشَبَهُمْ نَوْجٌ كَأَنَّ الْمَوْتِ هُوَ اللَّهُ مُخْلِصِينَ
 لَهُمُ الدِّينَ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَجَسَّصُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ
 وَمَا يَجِدُ إِلَّا إِلَهًُا آلَ كُلِّ كُفٍّ أَفْكَوهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 السَّمُوتَ بَكْرُؤًا شَتَّىٰ ۚ وَاسْتَوَىٰ يَوْمَ لَا يَجْرِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ
 وَلَدِهِ ۚ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارِعٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَتَبَيَّنُ
 إِنَّ رَغَدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ ۚ فَلَا تَغْرِبُ لَكَ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ

بالفضل

بالطوب

محراب جند

و

وَلَا يَغْنَمُ لَكَ فِي اللَّهِ الْغَنَاءُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ
 يَوْمَ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَخِزْيَالُ الْعَيْثِ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
 الْأَرْحَامِ ۚ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِمَاذَا تُكْسَبُ
 غَدًا ۚ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَوْدُ الْمَجْدَةِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ۚ
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ إِلَيْنَا الْكِتَابَ لَا تَأْتِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ غَيَابٌ
 أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتِرَاءٌ ۚ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
 لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ ۚ إِنَّ قَبْلَكَ لَأَعْلَمُ
 بِئِنَّكَ وَتَ ۚ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي يَوْمٍ أَثْنَاءِ مَا تَدْرِي عَلَىٰ الْقَرَارِ ۚ
 مَا كُنْتُمْ دُونَهُ مِنْ رَجٍ ۚ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ أَفْئِدًا
 تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۚ يُدْخِلُ الْأَمْثِينَ النَّارَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ

An exceptionally well preserved and neatly scripted 14th century Qur'an from the Middle East with leather binding. Written on quality hand made paper using *naskh* script. Red ink has been used for the *madda* signs, verse separators and surah titles. The last part of Surah Luqmaan (31) and the start of Surah as-Sajdah (The Prostration, 32) is shown with a detailed view on the opposite page.

[illegible]



Above

Heavily worn incipit pages from a late 17th or early 18th century small Ottoman Qur'an. There are seven lines of text per page bordered on all sides by gold filigree strapwork. A conventional feature of this Qur'an is the tripartite division of the page into central and upper and lower panels. The page margins are highly decorated with colourful floral designs and tassel-like extensions. The pages show the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) on the right and the beginning of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) on the left.

Opposite

Detailed view of an unusually decorated page showing the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a small Qur'an written in Palestine, 18th century. The text is written in *naskh* script within a cloud-like motif on a plain gold panel surrounded by an arrangement of red and yellow flowers. There is a strong use of blue in the surrounding framework.

لَا تَقْنَطَنَّ مِنَ الْغَيْبِ وَلَا تَيْئَسْ مِنْهُ هُدًى
وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيُصَلُّونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيُصَلُّونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيُصَلُّونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيُصَلُّونَ

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيُصَلُّونَ

A very large 12th century Qur'an from the Pre-Mamluk late Abbasid period. This magnificent 800 year old Qur'an consists of 377 pages and is written in an elegant archaic *muhaqqaq* style of Arabic script with floral roundels marking the end of each verse. The blue and gold marginal devices with the word *ashara* written in eastern *kufic* script using gold ink, indicate the end of every ten verses. Surah headings are copied in gold and outlined in black. The spine has been renewed at a later date and is bound in leather.

Approximately one third of the Qur'an leaves have substantial repairs typically to the margins but occasionally to the text area. Some of the pages have the marginal devices cut out. In spite of the damage, the Qur'an has many well preserved double pages and is very impressive by virtue of its size, very beautiful calligraphy and illumination. The size and type of paper used, as well as the calligraphy and the illumination indicate that this Qur'an was most likely copied for a wealthy person in the community or an important mosque. The pages are open on Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets, 26) and show the last word of verse 106 to the end of verse 153.

مَصْنَعُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ وَلَا يَطْشُمُ بَطْشُهُمْ جَبَانِيْنَ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَاطِيعُونَ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي مَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَمْ دَكَّرْتُمْ بِنِعْمِهِ وَسَيَرُ وَجْهَاتِ
وَعِيُونَ لَنِي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَذَابُ
لَئِمَّةٍ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْأَعْظِيمِ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ لَهوَ الْغَرِبِ الرَّحِيمِ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ
صَالِحٌ الْأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُونَ وَمَا
أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَتَيْتُمُ الْعَامِلِينَ أَتْرَكْتُمْ فِي مَآهَا هُنَا
أَمِينٌ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعِوَضٍ وَزُرُوعٍ وَخَلْ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ وَتَنَحَّوْزُ
مِنْ الْجِبَالِ يَنْفِرُ فِيهَا فَيَرَى فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُونَ وَلَا تَطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ
الَّذِينَ يَفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يَصْلَحُونَ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ

لَا تَقُولُ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا وَمَا أَسْلَمَ عَلَيْهِ
 مِنْ آجَرٍ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى رِزْقِ الْعَالَمِينَ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا قَالُوا
 أَنْوْمُكَ وَاتَّبَعْنَاكَ الْأَنْدَلُوتُ قَالَ وَمَا عَلَيَّ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ إِنْ
 حِسَابُهُ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّي لَوْ تَشْعُرُونَ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدٍ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنَّكَ إِلَّا
 نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ قَالُوا لَيْزَ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَا نُوحُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ قَالَ
 رَبِّ إِنِّي قَوْمِي كَذَبُونَ فَافْتَحْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتَحْ وَبَخَّ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 فَاجْنِبْنَا وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفَلَكَ الْمَشْحُونِ ثُمَّ غَرَقْنَا بَعْدَ الْبَقِيَّةِ أَنْكَارًا
 ذَلِكَ لَأَيَّةٌ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِنَّكَ لَمَوْلَى الرَّحِمِ
 كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ هُودُ لَا تَقُولُوا إِنِّي لَكُمْ
 رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا وَمَا أَسْلَمَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ آجَرٍ
 أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى رِزْقِ الْعَالَمِينَ أَنْبِئُونِ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ تَعْبَثُونَ فَخَذُّوا

نصف

Following pages
 Close-up low angle view of
 further pages from this same
 800 year old Qur'an showing
 the start of Surah an-Noor (The
 Light, 24).

Two ornate pages from a magnificent Mamluk Qur'an written in large majestic *muhaqqaq* script dated to the 14th century Egypt. The main text is written fully vocalised within a central compartment of lightly coloured flowing floral designs and bordered by a simple rectangular frame. Single verse divisions are marked by simple rosette shapes. Surah headings are finely embellished in white ornamental *kufic* script against a blue background. A large marginal hasp with an arabesque-like design dominates the centre of each folio. The folios are 41 cm high by 32 cm wide. Surah al-Falaq (The Daybreak, 113) is written on the right hand page with Surah an-Naas (Mankind, 114) on the left.



سورة الملوك وسورة الممتحنة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا

خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقَاتِ إِذَا وَقَبَ

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

سورة الملوك وسورة الممتحنة



The start of the 3rd juz' from Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) verse 253, written in *muhaqqaq* script and extensively decorated throughout in gold. Most likely from the late Mamluk period written during the 14th century copied on thick hand made paper with heavy staining on the corner of each page indicating frequent use over the centuries. There are just three lines of text per page surrounded by a floral trellis.



This manuscript is unusual in many respects, the additional notes for instance are sometimes written horizontally and even upside down. The material used is thick hand made paper. The manuscript is in several segments and is no longer bound together in one volume as the covers have been lost. The double pages show verses 60-63 of Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27). The blue text on top of the right hand page indicates the twentieth *juz*'.



الحزب العشر

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ

ذَاتِ بَهْجَةٍ مَّا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا

أَلَمْ يَخْلُقْ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ قَوْمًا يَعْبُدُونَهُ

أَمْ يَجْعَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ قُرَارًا مَّجْلًا

وَجَعَلَ لَهَا دَوَابَّ يَعْبُدُونَهَا

أَلَمْ يَخْلُقْ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ قَوْمًا يَعْبُدُونَهُ

صد
الفجد

Following pages

Close-up view of the same Anatolian Qur'an with the words *amman kalaqa* written in red. The text starts from verse 60 of Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27); "Is not He (better than your gods) Who created the heavens and the earth..."

سورة الماعون سبعة آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُدْعَى بِالْإِسْمِ الَّذِي يَدْعُ

الَّذِي يَدْعُ إِلَى الْإِسْمِ وَلَا يَفْقَهُ طَعَامَ

الْمُسْكِينِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يَرَاوُنَ وَيَمْنَحُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

سورة الكوثر سبعة آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُ إِذَا نَفَخَ الْفُجَارُ فَجَلَّ جَلَلُهُ

إِن شَاءَ نَحْنُ نَكْفِيهِ وَإِن شَاءَ نَنْسِفْهُ

فَنَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ

فَنَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ

فَنَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ ثُمَّ نَكْفِيهِ

فصل من سورة قال لي صلى الله عليه وسلم
سورة الماعون غفر الله لمن كان للزكاة
خمس من سورة حمد ديكما تا دورا
اورا اذ علم بالاهل وتمامه نكاه دورا
ارمان باهلا درين انمولند
عوضه اند

فصل من سورة قال لي صلى الله عليه وسلم
سورة الماعون غفر الله لمن كان للزكاة
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ارمان باهلا درين انمولند
عوضه اند

Further pages from the 14th century Anatolian Qur'an featuring; Surah al-Feel (The Elephant, 105); Surah Quraysh (106), Surah al-Maa'oon (The Small Kindnesses, 107) and Surah al-Kawthar (A River in Paradise, 108).

سورة الفيل طبت ربي خمس آيات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُ تَدْرِيْكَ فَقَدْ رُبِّدَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْاَفْنَادِ

الْمَ يَجْعَلْ لِيَدْنَهُ فِي تَخْلِيلِ قَارِبِ

عَلَيْهِمْ طَبْرًا ^{مفرد} ابا ^{مفرد} مِيلَ ^{مفرد} تَرْتَمِزُهُ ^{مفرد} بِجَانِبِ ^{مفرد} مَنْ ^{مفرد}

سَجِيدٌ فِي عَوَالِمِ اَعْصَفِ مَا لَوْ

مورنه در پشت مکتبه وهي ملائک آیات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فهم رحلة الشتاء
مصوّر لوقوع الليل

هَذَا الْبَيْتُ الَّذِي

در هر سوره قائل بود صلوات الله علیه و سلم
 الصلوات اعطاه الله تعالى ايام حشره
 والموتى حشره از سوره بجهت تقدی
 فرمود بار وودایتی دوسته بجاء بار
 نماز ناسر و حشر و در آخر یان نماز نام
 بر منجمه و لک بر مصروع خواند بتر بنور
 در وقت نایل از در کعبه از الله عز
 و در ترکیف بخواند خدای سر نشین از وی
 دفع کرداند

Handwritten text in a script, likely Indic, with some characters highlighted in red ink.

اياها على ان اخرجوها
 فالتا اخرجوا منها
 اثنان كذا
 عود

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Handwritten manuscript snippet showing several lines of text in Arabic script.

ايتها عليا السلام
 كانه جوفك مشه واصل
 وبعيد كونه واصل
 فظلم المروءت فحوت الحق بالدار
 الكفار وتظاد لم بالظلم والبيس
 سببه اموره وامر الله ومروء القيل
 الكفار بخلط الصف الجوراء

This image shows a fragment of a manuscript page from the Voynich manuscript. The text is written in the characteristic Voynich script, which consists of stylized, rounded characters. The fragment is irregularly shaped, with a torn right edge. The text is written in dark ink on aged, yellowed parchment. Some words are highlighted in red ink. The fragment contains several lines of text, with some words appearing to be repeated or written in a larger, more decorative script. The overall appearance is that of an ancient, handwritten document.

فليس بل لا ف ابتداء السلام جافضه كذا ودر عرب اعجاز خوف جافضه كند
اما كوي سوره اول و بزر سوره در معنی بگویند یعنی احوال فیل را عملی كردیم
از برای ازار كردن قریب سون خون میگویند معنی دلدار فضا را باقیه را
میگویند قریب ایلیاق قریب فیلان هذا اللامه فضا را بیه معناه فضا
میر عملی کایت را باقیه قریب ایلیاقهم معذرته مکرری کرد از برای ناکید
ذو لک موضع موضع ذکر معذرت و قریب در حال او عازر عذرت بی غفلت زدند
بیا تلف قریب علی حلیه و الشا و الصف البین ما قریب معنی القریب
قربت فال الصفی کانت القریب حلیه کای الشار فی الصف و حلیه ایلی البین
الشفا للقارة فیل لوان قریب انشیر کعبه عزمه انشد اگر ابره در حجاب

مِنْ تَعْدِ نَوْحٍ وَكَفَى بِكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا
 كَاذِبِينَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ كُنَّا لَكَ فِيهَا مَائِدَةً مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ يَدُودٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا
 لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلِيهَا مِذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا
 سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا كَلَّا نُمَدِّ
 هَؤُلَاءِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عِطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عِطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا
 أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ الْكِبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَالْكَبَرُ
 تَفْضِيلًا لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُومًا
 وَفَضَى رَبِّكَ أَلا تَعْبُدُ وَالْإِلَٰهَ إِلَٰهًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا أَمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ
 عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا وَلا
 تَنْهَهُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا وَخَفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ
 الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَّانِي صَغِيرًا

This very interesting Qur'an page held by Exhibition Islam is nearly 1,000 years old and originates from the Seljuk period of Islamic history during the time of the Crusades. The manuscript is written on thick linen paper which is typical of the time as an alternative to the more expensive vellum. The page is heavily stained and has undergone repair work around the edges. Scripted in *archaic naskh*, the page has an additional unusual feature in that the roundels marking the verse endings contain *eastern kufic* script. The right hand page starts with part of verse 9 from Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night, 17) ending on verse 24 on the left hand page; indicated by the *eastern kufic* roundel.

الصَّلَاحَاتِ أَنْ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ۝ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ
 أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝ وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ
 وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتٍ فَحَسْبُونا
 آيَةُ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا
 عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلَنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ۝ وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ
 أَلَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ
 مَنشُورًا ۝ اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ۝
 مَنْ أَهْنَدَكَ فَاثْمًا يُهْتَدِ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاثْمًا يُضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا
 نُزِرُ وَازِرَةً وَزُرًّا أُخْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا
 وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ
 عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا ۝ وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ الْقُرُونِ

The Three Stages of Revelation



The story of the Qur'anic revelation begins before creation itself. It is important to understand the reality that the Qur'an has always existed before anything was created as the Speech of Allah. The Almighty Creator then chose to reveal the Qur'an to mankind in three stages.

The first stage of revelation

The first stage of revelation was when Allah ordered the writing of His Direct Speech onto the Book which is with Allah, known as the 'Preserved Tablet' (*al-Lauh al-Mahfuz*). This 'Preserved Tablet' contains details of everything that will happen until the end of time. Our knowledge of the unseen realms comes from the Qur'an itself where Allah states that the Qur'an is inscribed in *al-Lauh al-Mahfuz*.

"Nay! This is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in *al-Lauh al-Mahfuz* (The Preserved Tablet)!"

Surah al-Burooj (The Mansions of the Stars) 85: 21-22.

There is also a tradition of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that speaks about the 'Pen': "*The first thing that Allah created was the Pen. He (Allah) said to it, 'Write!' It responded, 'O My Lord! And what shall I write?' Allah said, 'Write the destiny of all things until the Day of Judgement.'*"

Reported by Abu Dawood.

Hence, we know that the entire Qur'an, along with everything else that has happened, is happening, or is waiting to happen until the Day of Judgement is written on this tablet. How the Qur'an is written and precisely when it was written is knowledge that is with Allah alone.

This provides further proof to mankind that the Qur'an is authentic and free from corruption. Since Allah has revealed that the Qur'an was written even before the creation of the heavens and the Earth into a book that Allah protects; thereby guaranteeing its authenticity.

The second stage of revelation

The second stage of revelation occurred when Allah ordered the Qur'an to be revealed to the lower heavens in a place called *al-Bayt al-Izza* (The House of Honour). This revelation took place in the month of Ramadan during *Laylat al-Qadr* (The Night of Decree) as follows.

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the Guidance and the Criterion (between right and wrong)."

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 185.

"Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree)."

Surah al-Qadr (The Night of Decree) 97: 1.

The blessed night is the Night of *al-Qadr* in the month of Ramadan. These verses clearly state that the entire Qur'an was sent down by Allah from the 'Preserved Tablet' to the lower heavens. The second stage of the revelation of the Qur'an was similar to the revelation of the previous scriptures, in that the entire revelation was completed in one single transmission to the House of Honour. The only difference in this respect was that the previous scriptures were sent down from the lower heavens to the previous prophets on Earth in one single act of transmission.

Opposite

Surah an-Nahl (The Bee, 16) from a Qur'an dated to around the 16th century from the Middle East, written in a hybrid variant of *naskh* and *muhaqqaq* script. Very limited decoration with no verse numbering, and chapter headings and verse endings indicated by a marking scheme using red ink.

Decorative incipit page from an outstanding 14th century Qur'an manuscript commissioned by the Mamluk Sultan, Faraj ibn Barquq. The page is divided into three sections in traditional Mamluk style. The text is written in a refined *rayhani* script in black ink with monumental angular *kufic* in white at the top. The left hand margin is dominated by three large ornaments. The page shows the last few words of verse 88 to the start of verse 89 from Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights, 7). Location: British Library, London.

The third stage of revelation

The superiority of the Qur'an, however, meant that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had the honour of receiving the Qur'an on Earth gradually over a number of years. The method of revelation usually occurred in one of two ways. The Qur'an was either brought down as ordered by Allah through the Angel Gabriel, or was inspired directly into the heart and mind of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Almighty Allah refers to this distinct mode of revelation in many verses of the Qur'an, for example:

"And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of the *Alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists), which the trustworthy *Ruh* (Gabriel) has brought down upon your heart (O Muhammad ﷺ) that you may be (one) of the warners, in the plain Arabic language."

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 192-195.

Gradual revelation to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Allah, the All Powerful Creator, says in the Qur'an:

"Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e. obligations, laws)."

Surah al-Muzzammil (The One Wrapped in Garments) 73: 5.

This verse clearly tells humanity that the revelation of the Qur'an sent down by Allah is a very mighty and powerful revelation that guides humanity to good and forbids evil. It provides a complete and perfect legal system that outlines the rights for all of creation, providing a way of life as defined by Allah. Hence, a revelation of this magnitude cannot be revealed in one go, it is something that must be revealed gradually.

This unique mode of revelation occurred over a period of twenty-three years so that people would learn and understand what the revelation meant, which would in turn strengthen their belief.

"And (it is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts), in order that you might recite it to men at intervals. And We have revealed it by stages."

Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night) 17: 106.

In another verse Allah says:

"And those who disbelieve say: "Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?" Thus (it is sent down in parts), that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages."

Surah al-Furqaan (The Criterion) 25: 32.

Regarding this verse Ibn Kathir comments:

"Allah tells us about the many objections raised by the disbelievers, their stubbornness, and how they spoke of things which were none of their concern.

They said: **"Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once"**, meaning, why was this Qur'an, which was revealed to him, not sent down all at one time, as the previous Books, the *Taurat*, *Injeel*, *Zabur* and other Divine books. Allah answered them, telling them that it was revealed in stages over twenty-three years, according to events and circumstances, and whatever rulings were needed in order to strengthen the hearts of the believers, as He says:

"And (it is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts)..."

Surah al-Israa (The Night Journey) 17: 106.

وَرَكَّابًا مَكْنُونًا

مِلْنَا فَا لْأَوَّلُ كُنَّا كَاهِنًا

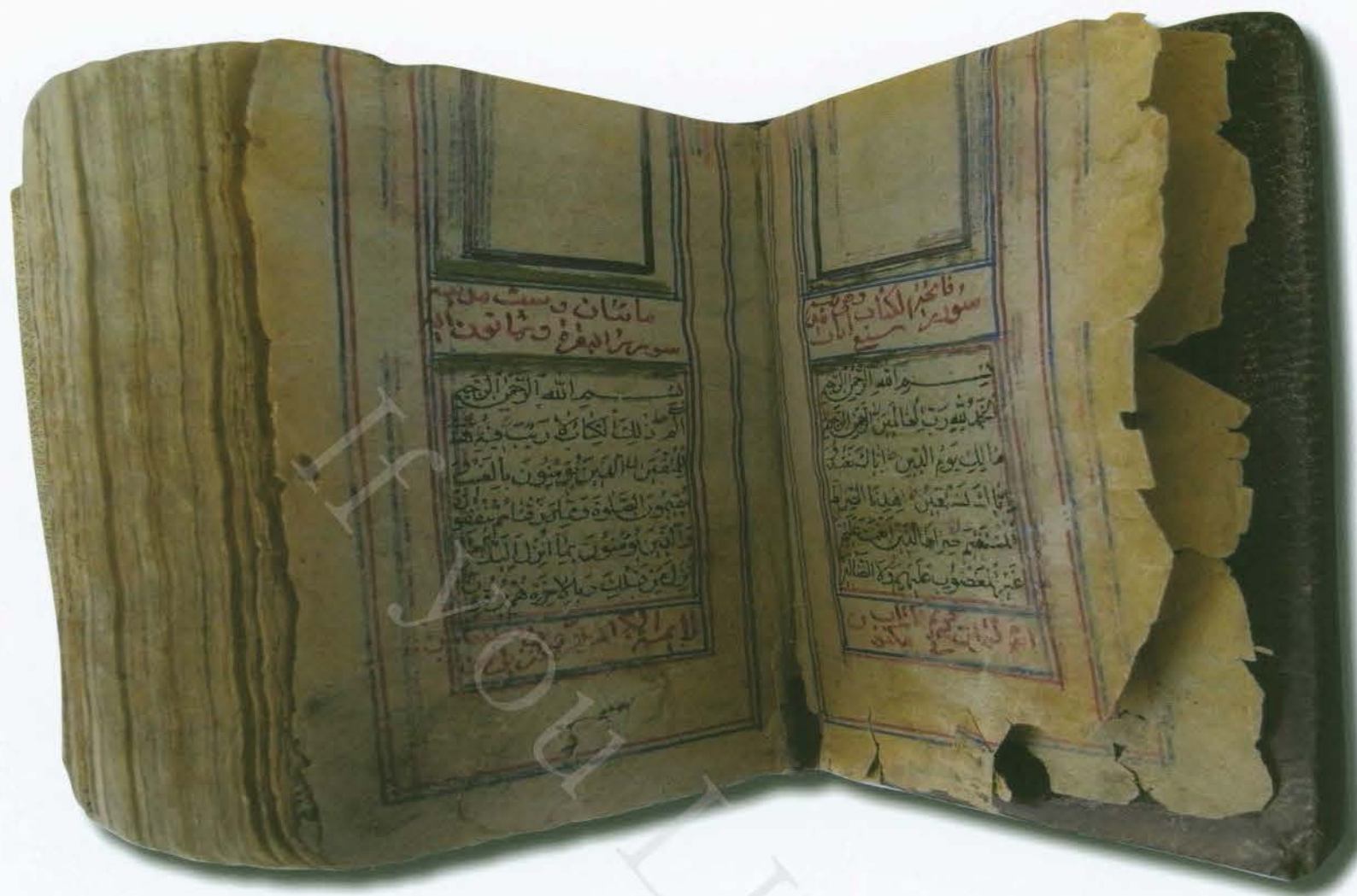
فَدِافَرْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ لَذِيَّا اِزْعَدْنَا فِي

مِلْنَا رَعْدًا اِزْجَبْنَا اَبَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا

الْحَرَامِ



Both sides from a very rare 10th century Qur'anic fragment written in *kufic* script with a red dotting scheme. The lower fragment shows a floral verse separator painted in gold. The text is from Surah At-Tawbah (The Repentance, 9). The top fragment starts from the middle of verse 115 and ends with the second to last word (*shay-in*). The text continues on the lower fragment and ends in the middle of verse 116 (*wa yumeetu*). During the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and up to the 10th century, the majority of Qur'anic manuscripts tended to be written in stylized angular Arabic scripts such as *hijazi*, *ma'il* and *kufic*. At first the Qur'an was usually written without vowel markings. The expansion of Muslim territories led to the addition of vowels and dotting schemes to aid correct pronunciation as well as the development of more rounded cursive scripts such as those of the classic 'Six Pens'.



Opening pages showing Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a Middle Eastern Qur'an, late 17th century. This very small leather bound manuscript is only lightly decorated with simple lines and was most likely used by a traveller.

Allah says: **“that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages.”**

Qatadah said it means: *“We have explained it.”*

Abdur-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam said it means: *“We have given its interpretation.”*

“And no example or similitude do they bring”, this means no arguments or doubts, **“but We reveal to you the truth, and the better explanation thereof.”**

They do not say anything in an attempt to oppose the truth, but We respond to them with the truth of that same matter, more clearly and more eloquently than anything they say. Abu Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i recorded that Ibn Abbas said, “The Qur'an was sent down all at once to the first heaven on *Laylatul-Qadr* (The Night of Power), then it was revealed over twenty three years.”¹

In order to establish a complete way of life effectively, it was important to reveal the Direct Words of Allah gradually so that people could learn and cope with implementing fundamental changes in their lives. Allah in His Infinite Wisdom and complete Mercy knew that to send down such a powerful revelation required stages so that basic fundamentals could be established and built upon.

Simply sending down so many Divinely revealed laws all at once was going to be difficult for the majority of people to accept. Therefore, Allah decreed that the Qur'an would be revealed gradually to allow the people to change their lives over a period of time.

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ commented:

“The first revelations only mentioned Heaven and Hell (the basics of aqeedah (belief)). Eventually when the people were firm in their conviction of Islam, Allah revealed the halaal (permitted) and haraam (prohibited). If the first verse revealed was, ‘Do not drink wine’, they would have responded, ‘We will never give up wine!’ And if the first verse revealed was, ‘Do not fornicate’, they would have responded, ‘We will never give up fornication!’”

Reported by Bukhari.

Thus, we see that Allah, the Almighty Creator, knew that such powerful and detailed laws required a gradual revelation in order for people to become accustomed to and accept the Divine message. Hence, Allah gave a blessing to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his followers through the course of time by revealing the Qur'an gradually. In the following pages we shall examine some of the many other benefits that were associated with the gradual revelation of the Qur'an.

مَرَكَّزُ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ خَاصَّةً لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي
 الذِّكْرِ وَلِيُذَكِّرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 قُلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا
 فِيكُمْ غُلَقَةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ وَإِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
 مَوْفُورًا بِكُمْ زَاكَاةً لَهُمْ لِيُذَكِّرُوا
 قَوْمًا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ
 يَسْتَنْصِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ
 قَبْرَاءُ نَهْمُ رَحِمًا لِيُذَكِّرُوا قَوْمًا
 وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا

يَتَوَبُّونَ وَإِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةَ
 بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ مَوْفُورًا بِكُمْ
 زَاكَاةً لَهُمْ لِيُذَكِّرُوا قَوْمًا
 وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ
 وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ
 كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ وَإِنَّا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ

A Qur'an from North Africa
 written in flowing *maghribi*
 script, 18th century.
Maghribi script, named after
 the Maghrib region in North
 Africa, has its origins in the
western kufic style. It became
 the most widely used script in
 North Africa and in Muslim
 Spain by the 12th century.
 The script is recognised by
 its more rounded and deeper
 curves that extend below the
 line. Another characteristic
 feature is that vowel signs are
 traditionally penned using a
 variety of different colours
 to the main text; with red,
 blue and saffron being used
 most commonly. The pages
 show the end of verse 122
 from Surah at-Tawbah (The
 Repentance, 9) to the start of
 the Surah Yunus (Jonah, 10).

The benefits of gradual revelation

1. Strengthening Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ resolve.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ faced many years of persecution
 as he delivered the Divine message of Islam within his
 community. He was often ridiculed and mocked, had dirty
 things thrown at him, called a liar and even beaten. As a
 mercy, Allah delivered the Qur'an and thus the message
 of Islam gradually, to steady and strengthen the resolve
 of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, thus enabling him to spread
 the message of Islam with determination. This method
 of revelation also helped to strengthen the faith of his
 companions so they too could hold firm to the message
 of Islam and face the many trials with fortitude.

"Thus (it is sent down in parts), that We may strength-
 en your heart thereby."

Surah al-Furqaan (The Criterion) 25: 32.

Over the course of the revelation, Allah constantly
 reminded Prophet Muhammad ﷺ of the trials of previ-
 ous prophets, so that he too would be comforted and
 strengthened by these stories. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"And all that We relate to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) of
 the news of the Messengers is in order that We may
 make strong and firm your heart thereby."

Surah Hud (Prophet Hud) 11: 120.

Allah also told Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to be patient in
 the following verse:

"Therefore be patient (O Muhammad ﷺ) as did the
 Messengers of strong will..."

Surah al-Ahqaaf (The Curved Sand-Hills) 46: 35.



In other verses Allah promises Prophet Muhammad ﷺ help and victory by saying:

“Allah has decreed: “Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall be the victorious.” Verily, Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.”

Surah al-Mujaadilah (The Woman who Disputes)
58: 21.

2. To simplify memorisation and understanding by the companions.

The gradual mode of revelation of the Qur'an was vital in ensuring its preservation as the Qur'an was much easier to memorise in this manner. The other great benefit was that the people around Prophet Muhammad ﷺ could understand its meaning and implement the verses of the Qur'an correctly. They were also able to then go on and teach the Qur'an to others with relative ease.

We know that the previous Divine revelations were always revealed in a single act of revelation. However, given the enormity of its revelation, the Qur'an would have been difficult to understand if it had been revealed all at once.

3. To prove the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

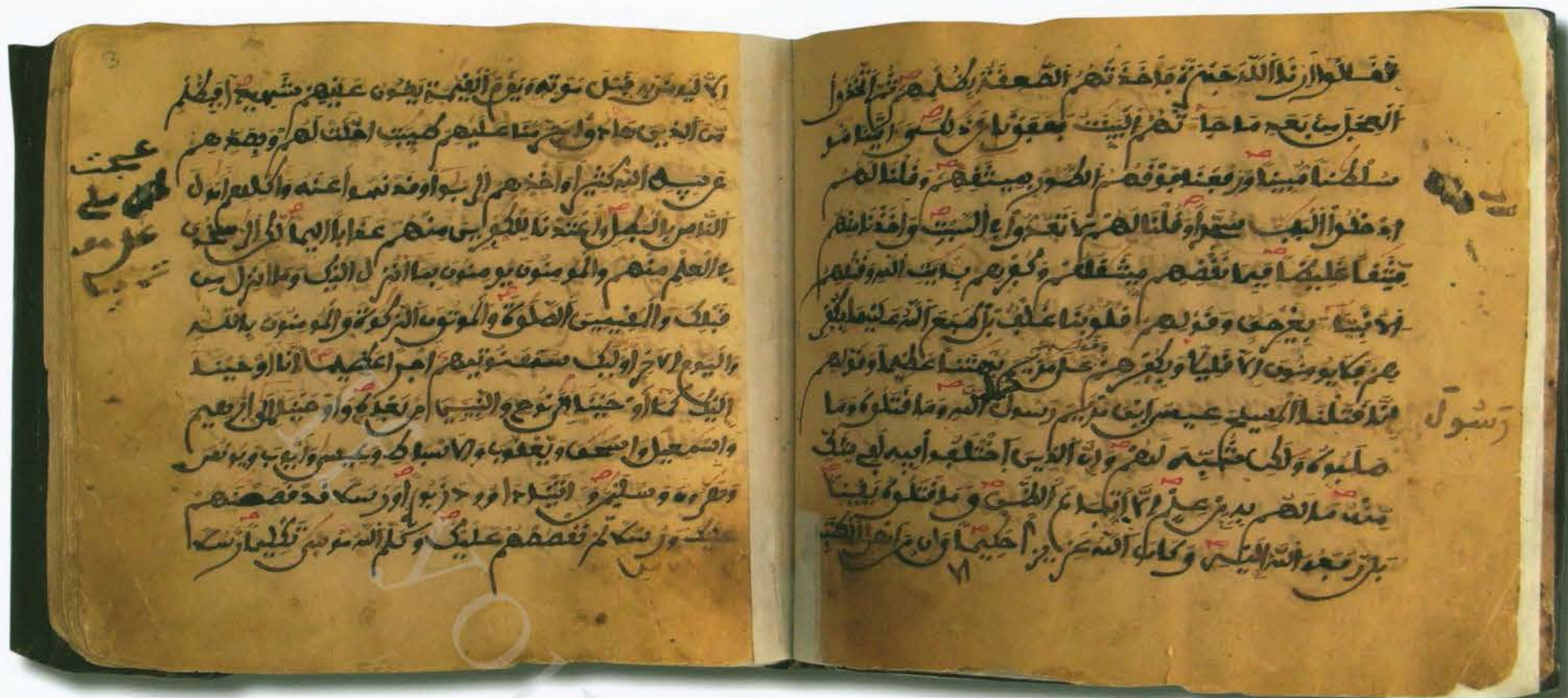
The pagan Arabs and the 'People of the Book' made attempts to trick Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by asking him difficult questions which they assumed he had no knowledge of. Allah refers to this in the Qur'an by saying:

“And no example or similitude do they bring (to oppose or to find fault in you or in this Qur'an), but We reveal to you the truth (against that similitude or example), and the better explanation thereof.”

Surah al-Furqaan (The Criterion) 25: 33.

Two leaves from a 15th century North African Qur'an written using *maghribi* style Arabic script on vellum. Sparsely decorated and in fragile conditions, the right hand page starts with part of verse 255 (*ayatul kursi*) from Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) through to verse 264 on the left.

[illegible]



An uncle of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Ibn Abbas said: "Whenever the disbelievers brought a new question to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Allah would reveal to them an answer; through the Qur'an." ²

Indeed there are even examples where the pagan Arabs asked for miracles from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

"And even if We had sent down to them angels, and the dead had spoken to them, and We had gathered together all things before their very eyes, they would not have believed, unless Allah willed, but most of them behave ignorantly."

Surah al-An'aam (The Cattle) 6: 111.

Furthermore, when the companions themselves had questions and problems, often Allah sent down revelation containing the answer in the Qur'an, which clearly laid out the solution to the problem that had been posed.

4. To prove the Divine nature of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is one of the miracles which Allah gave to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and there are many aspects of its miraculous nature.³ For instance, Muslims still live and guide their lives by its teachings. The Qur'an, despite the great variation in subject matter, retains throughout a unique consistency of expression. Varying subjects are intimately interwoven and appear to the reader to be interconnected, its rich language maintains rhyme and has a flow to the rhythm and it has revealed many things which were unknown fourteen hundred years ago.

All of this proves the miraculous and Divine nature of the revelation of the Qur'an. If it had been composed by a human being, then over a period of twenty-three years of revelation, some inconsistency in content, language, style, flow, rhythm and so on would have been inevitable. Yet, the Qur'an maintains all of these features in a consistent manner, even when covering diverse subjects such as the Divine laws, attributes of the Creator, the Oneness of Allah, stories of the previous prophets and nations, the natural world and so on and so forth.

Amazingly, to add to the miraculous and Divine nature of the Qur'an, the order of the verses in the Qur'an we have today is not chronological. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would instruct the companions of the location of any new revelation. The Qur'an was thus carefully assembled from fragmented revelations into a perfectly formed and intricate masterpiece and remains to the present day in exactly the same order as instructed by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many a contradiction."

Surah an-Nisaa (The Women) 4: 82.

Above

Pages from the sixth juz' of a North African or possibly Andalusian 30 volume Qur'an. Handwritten in small *maghribi* script using brown ink on originally white paper. The above volume was copied in the 15th century and due to its compact size was most likely used during travelling for the purposes of recitation and worship. The pages are open on Surah an-Nisaa (The Women, 4), part of verse 153 to 164 on the other page.

Opposite

Complete Qur'an dated 1085 AH (1707 CE) by the scribe. From the North African region written in *sudani* script by a jagged hand on embossed tan coloured paper and bound with a leather cover. The page starts with part of verse 64 from Surah an-Nisaa (The Women, 4).

Opposite

A Qur'anic scroll originating from the Middle East showing Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1), early 20th century. There are elaborate geometric designs and extensive use of floral patterns throughout this scroll. The manuscript is 7 metres long by 30 cm wide and is written in *thuluth* script. Unusually there is no 'Bismillah' at the start of the Surah.

Ibn Kathir states in his Qur'an commentary regarding this verse:

"Allah commands them to contemplate about the Qur'an and forbids them from ignoring its wise meaning and eloquent words. Allah states that there are no inconsistencies, contradictions, conflicting statements or discrepancies in the Qur'an, because it is a revelation from the Most-Wise, Worthy of all praise.

Therefore, the Qur'an is the truth coming from the true source, Allah. This is why Allah said in another ayah '**Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)**'. Allah then said, '**Had it been from other than Allah**', meaning, had it been fraudulent and made up, as the ignorant idolaters and hypocrites assert in their hearts, '**they would surely, have found therein contradictions**', discrepancies and inconsistencies, (in abundance). However, this Qur'an is free of shortcomings, and therefore, it is from Allah."

5. To reveal the laws of Islam in a gradual manner.

The Qur'an presented the principles and laws of Islam in a gradual manner. If every instruction had been sent down instantaneously this would have been too much for the followers of Islam to understand and implement in their lives. Thus, Allah in His Mercy revealed these in stages to allow understanding and implementation of the Divine revelation.

The early verses that were revealed established the Oneness of Allah (*Tawheed*), the Supremacy and Singularity of Allah alone, the removal of false gods, by telling people to stay away from the worship of false gods and to worship Allah alone. The rest of the early verses to be revealed established the major pillars of faith (*eemaan*), belief in resurrection and the Day of Judgement where mankind will stand before Allah and be judged as to how they lived their lives.

After twelve years of building faith and establishing the Oneness of Allah, the principles of worship were slowly introduced. Initially the early Muslims only had to pray in the morning and evening, Allah then later increased these to five times a day. It was two years after the migration to

Madinah that the Qur'anic verses dealing with fasting in *Ramadan* and *Zakah* (alms giving to the poor etc.) were decreed to the Muslims. Prior to this, even though Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions fasted and gave to charity for the sake of Allah, it was only at this point that it was made compulsory and the minimum amounts were set by Allah.

The last pillar of Islam, the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) was made an obligation four years later for all of those who were able to perform it. The reason for this gradual revelation of laws and principles of Islam was so that it did not place a great burden on anyone. The companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ could understand and adopt these principles and injunctions over a period of time and alter their lifestyle accordingly, as well as go on to teach other people.

6. To ease the burden on Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The process of revelation and inspiration was a difficult one for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The severity of revelation coming to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ placed great physical pressure upon him and often during the process of receiving revelation he would sweat profusely. Had the Qur'an been revealed in one go this may have been too difficult for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to bear physically.

Al-Harith ibn Hisham asked the Messenger of Allah:

"O Allah's Messenger! How is the Divine Inspiration revealed to you?"

Allah's Messenger replied:

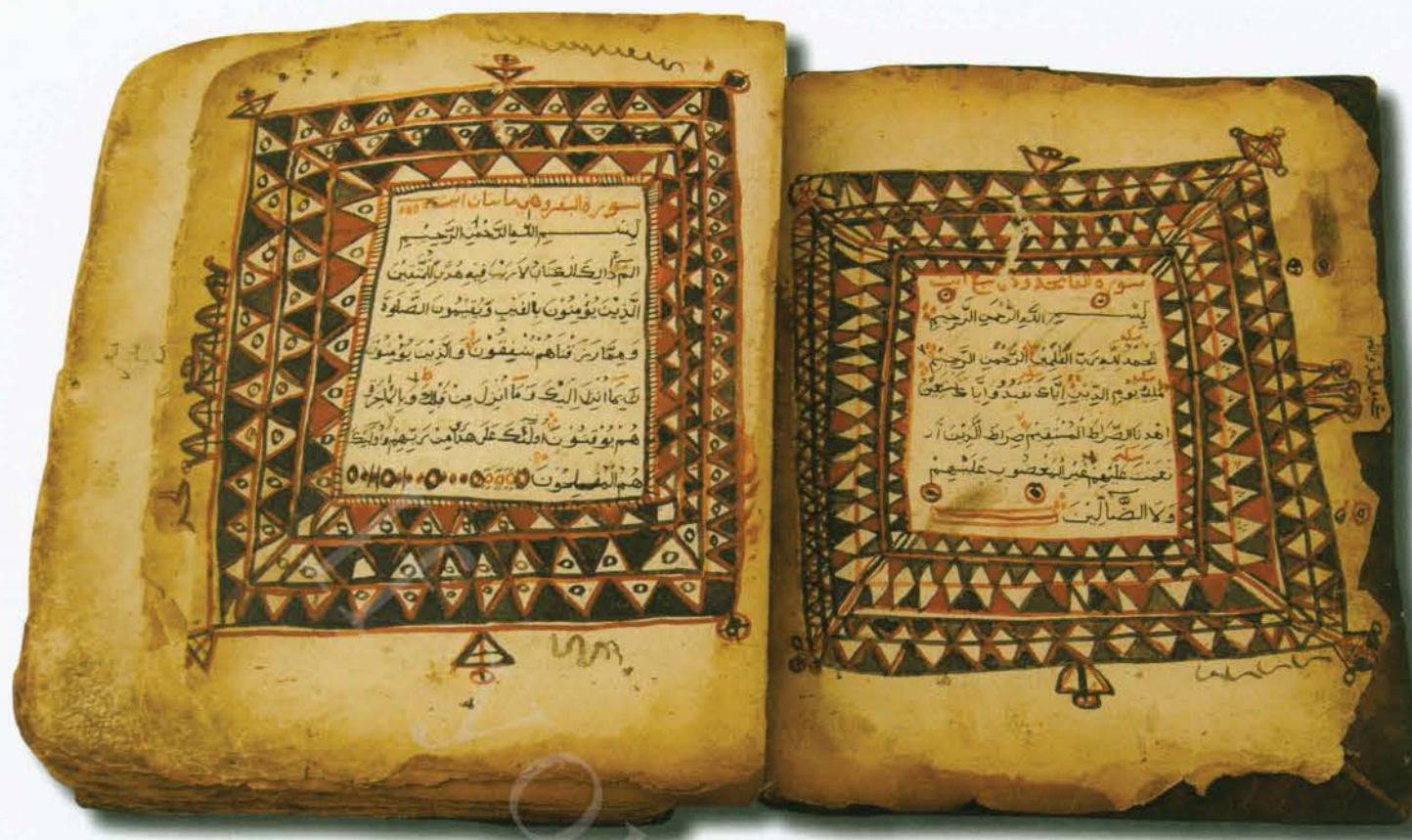
"Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell, this form of inspiration is the hardest of all and then this state passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp whatever he says."

Aishah added: Verily I saw the Prophet ﷺ being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the inspiration was over).

Narrated by Aishah, reported by Bukhari.







Opening pages from an 18th century African Qur'an most likely from Ethiopia written in a local style. The pages are bordered with triangular geometric shapes coloured in a variety of earth tones.

7. To simplify the writing of the Qur'an.

The slow pace of revelation allowed the early Muslims time to record the Qur'an in written form. Given the lack of literate people and limited availability of writing materials in general, if the entire Qur'an had been revealed at once it may have been difficult to preserve.

Thus, gradual revelation allowed the purity of the teachings of Islam to be preserved. It also allowed the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to contemplate upon the meaning of verses and to ask questions as well as to implement its true meanings. In this way, the first generation of Muslims were able to gain a complete understanding of the Qur'an and were then able to teach other people within the city of Madinah and beyond.

The gradual revelation was also in itself a mechanism to preserve the Qur'an as it could not only be accurately recorded and memorised, but also understood. This provided many educational benefits: it developed the early Muslims mentally, spiritually and physically with written material available to guide them in the correct direction. In turn, the early Muslims taught the succeeding generation in the same gradual manner, thus instilling them with the same principles.

Why were the earlier Divinely revealed books revealed instantaneously?

One question that naturally arises is why were the earlier Divinely revealed books revealed in one go and not gradually like the Qur'an? The answer to this question lies in the purpose and situation for which each of the

previous books were sent. The Divinely revealed books sent prior to the Qur'an were sent for short periods of time in history and directed to specific nations or tribes, whereas the Qur'an was sent to all of humanity. The message of the Qur'an has been sent as the last Divinely revealed message until the Day of Judgement. The previous books contained principles which were not time or situation oriented and thus could be revealed all at once during the start or at any other point during the mission of the prophet to whom they were sent. In some cases, earlier prophets were immediately followed by other prophets and in some instances two prophets were even present together.

As each prophet and his Divinely revealed book only represented a part of the overall message, the progression took place from prophet to prophet rather than within the revelation. It is important to bear in mind that the previous Divine books were revealed in one go, as this is what Allah had decreed. Allah understood the situation in which they were being revealed and the purpose behind their revelation.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the last of the prophets and was given the last Divinely revealed book, the Qur'an. This revelation contained the essential message of all the previous books as well as a complete way of life and set of Divine laws by which humanity was expected to live. Therefore, the progression had to take place within the revelation of the message itself as laws were introduced gradually for the reasons stated previously. Hence, each Divinely revealed book was revealed in a manner that best suited its historical situation at the time.

Opposite page

A small square format Qur'an from North Africa or possibly Andalusia written in *maghribi* script, 15th century. There are fifteen lines of text per page set within a triple line border. The bright orange marginal medallion has the word *hizb* written in red ink indicating the halfway position in the *juz'*. Vowel markings are penned in green, saffron and orange. The acidity of the ink has caused some show through in the margins. The top image shows Surah as-Saaffaat (Those Ranged in Ranks, 37) from part of verse 141 to part of verse 14 of the next Surah (Saad, 38). The title of Surah Saad appears to be written in a much thicker pen in orange and bears a limited resemblance to *kufic* script. The lower image is from the same Qur'an showing Surah an-Nahl (The Bee, 16) verses 31-54. A pear shape marginal medallion written with the word *sajdah*, to instruct the reader when to prostrate during recitation, is visible on the left.



A vellum Qur'an Leaf written in *kufic* Script, North Africa 10th Century. The body text is written in dark brown ink using an early vowel scheme with markings in red, blue and saffron. The page shows part of Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder, 13) starting from the second to last word of verse 19 (*ulul-al-baab*). It ends on the third to last word of verse 25 (*wa lahum*).

Elegant opening pages showing the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from an 18th century North African Qur'an written in sharp *maghribi* script. The main text is set within a rectangular frame with visually intense header panels each bearing the title of the surah at the top with decorative palmettes extending into the margins. Note the correction made by the scribe on the fourth line of Surah al-Baqarah. An important point to bear in mind is the fact that handwritten Qur'anic manuscripts would always be thoroughly checked for transcription errors before they were deemed complete.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ
 الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَكَ
 الذِّيرَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فَعَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
 قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَمَّا نُطِيقُ لَهُمْ غَسَلُوهَ وَلَهُمْ
 عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ يُخَيِّلُ مَوْنَ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَمَا يَنْجِي مَوْنَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَعْرِضُونَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
 مِمَّا ضَرَبَ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مَضًّا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ يَمَّا
 كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن
 لَا يَشْعُرُونَ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ
 قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السَّابِقُونَ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السَّابِقُونَ
 وَلَكِن لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
 وَإِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزَؤُونَ وَاللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّ
 لَهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُوا الْمَلَأَةَ
 بِالْهُدَى فَيَمَارِجُتْ بِجُرْتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

Opening pages showing the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) from a magnificent 18th century Qur'an written in *maghribi* style script by the Berber tribes from North Africa. Textual markers have been rendered in red and green ink. Surah headers are beautifully penned in larger flowing script in red and green. The body text is written in a continuous format without verse separators. The first word on the left hand page has been duplicated at the bottom of the right hand page as an aid to smooth recitation between the

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْ وَمَنْ تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ يَكْفُلْهُ

سورة الفاتحة مكية

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْمَلِكُ
الْقَدِيرُ إِلَهِكُمْ وَرَبُّكُمْ تَسْتَجِيبُ الدُّعَاءَ وَالصَّلَاةَ
الْمُسْتَجِيبُ مَنْ أَلَى يَدِ نِعْمَتِ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَقْضُوعِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

سورة البقرة مكية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْكِتَابَ
لَا رَيْبَ لَهُ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يَوْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
يَوْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآيَةِ
الْخَرِجَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ
هِيَ الْأُمَّةُ الْمُنِجَّةُ

الأنزلة

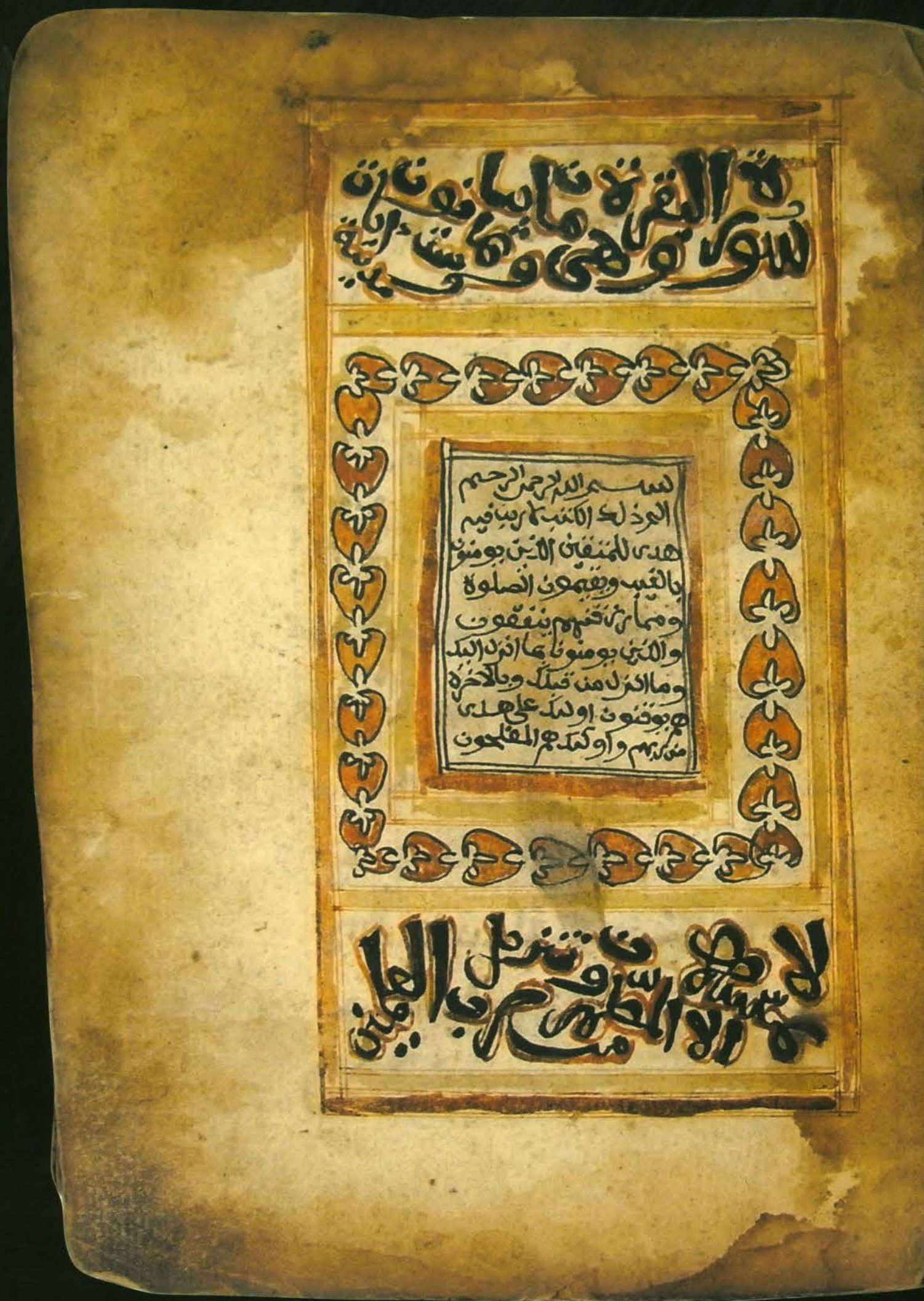
وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ يَمُرُّونَ فِي بَيْتِهِ
 إِذْ أَقْبُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ كَمَثَلِ الْعَشِيْقِ إِذَا قَالَ لِلطَّائِسِ
 اتَّخِمْ بَلْمَا كَفَى قَالَ إِنَّ بَرِيءٌ مِنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ قَدْ كَانَ
 عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَعْيُنِكُمْ قَدْ مَتَّعْتُمْ لَعْنَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الْغَيْبُوتَ وَكَانَ كَوْنُكُمْ أَكْثَرَ تَتَنَبَّأُونَ أَنَّكُمْ
 أَوْلِيَاءُ لَهُمُ الْبُيُوتُ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ الْحَبْلَ النَّارُ وَالْحَبْلَ الْجَنَّةِ أَتُحِبُّونَ الْجَنَّةَ
 هُمْ الْبَالِغُونَ لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْفُرْقَانُ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَهُمْ خَشْيَةً فَاغْتَمَصُوا
 مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ هُوَ اللَّهُ
 الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلِيمٌ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ
 الْغَنِيُّ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ
 الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ
 الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ الْغَنِيُّ
 سُوْرَةُ الْحَاشِرَةِ مَعْدُ نَبِيَّة

Surah al-Hashr (The Gathering, 59) part of verse 7 to the end of the surah from a Qur'anic leaf written in North Africa during the mid 17th century. The leaf contains fourteen lines of text per page set within a triple lined rectangular frame and written in *maghribi* script in brown ink on cream coloured paper. The text is fully vocalised and applied using the system developed by Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Fraheedi (circa 150 AH) with *fatha*, *damma* and *kasra* in red and other markings in saffron. Individual verses are marked by small green/grey devices that sit above the line. The page on the right has one small marginal device that indicates the end of the surah's first section.

فَخَذَوْهُ وَمَا تُطِيعُكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْشَقُّوا وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
 الْعَفْوَ لِلْعَفْرِ الْغَفِيرِ الَّذِينَ أَخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِينِهِمْ وَأَقُولِهِمْ
 يَتَتَفَعُونَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَيَنْصَرُونَ إِلَيْهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
 الْمُصَدِّقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدِّينَ وَالْآيَةَ مِنَ قَبْلِهِمْ يَتَجَنَّبُونَ مِنْ هَذَا جُزْءٍ
 الْيَمِينِ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَاجَةً شَيْئًا أَوْ تَوَاتُرًا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ
 وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَافَةٌ وَمَنْ يُؤْكُ شَيْئًا نَفْسِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتَقَبَّلُ الشَّعْءَ
 وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا
 بِالْإِيمَانِ وَكَانَ بَيْنَهُمْ فُلُوقٌ عُشُقًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ
 الْمَرَّ الَّذِينَ تَابُوا يَقُولُونَ لِمَ أَخَّرْتَنَا يَا أَبَا هَدٍ الْكَتَبَ لِمَنِ
 أَخْرَجْتَنَا لِنُخْرِجَنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ وَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ بَيْنَكُمْ أَحَدًا أَوْ آخَرَ فَتِلْكَ لَشُعْبَةٍ
 وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ لِيُؤْخِرُوا لِيُخْرِجُوا مَا تَحْزَنُونَ مَعْصُومٌ وَلِيٌّ فُتِلُوا
 مَا يَنْصَرُونَ ثُمَّ وَلِيٌّ نَقَرُوا لِيُؤْخِرُوا لِيُخْرِجُوا مَا تَحْزَنُونَ مَا تَحْزَنُونَ أَشَدَّ رَهْبَةً
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهِمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ مَا يَفْتَلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا
 فِي فَرٍّ مَحْصَنَةٍ أَوْ مَوْجِدٍ رَأْسُهَا سَبْعٌ شِدِيدٌ تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا

Opening pages from an 18th century Qur'an originating in the African Horn region. The manuscript is hand written in a local variant of *sudani* script with traditional African decoration in earth tones. Unusually for a Qur'an of this period the text has only limited vowel markings. The pages are split into a central compartment containing the main text within a simple frame and a header and footer panel with bolder text written in a much larger hand.

Note the heavily stained bottom corners and the coarse material cover just visible in the bottom right corner. The right hand page contains the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) with the first few verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) on the left.



سورة الفاتحة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العلمين
الرحمن الرحيم ملك يوم الدين
انا اعترعك وانا نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم
صراط الذين انعمت
عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين

ان الله اعلم بالصواب

وَتَفْقَهُمْ قَوْلًا قَالُوا لَيْتَ الْقُرْآنُ
 نَبِيٌّ إِنَّا يَا جُوحَ وَمَا جُوحَ مَفْسِدُونَ
 فِي الْأَرْضِ ضَافَهُمْ نَجْعَلُكَ خَرَجًا عَلَ
 أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا قَالَ مَا مَ
 مَكَّنِي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ
 أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا إِنِّي
 رَبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ
 الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ
 نَارًا قَالَ انْفُخُوا فَرَمَ عَلَيْهِ قَطْرًا فَمَا
 اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوا وَهُوَ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا
 عِوَالَهُ نَقَبًا قَالَ هَٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنِّي
 فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّىٰ جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ
 وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا وَتَرَكَنَا

Surah al-Kahf (The Cave, 18) from a Qur'an written in *sahrawi* script with limited decoration, 18th century. This Qur'an originates from the African Horn region and is bound with coarse leather material; some animal hair can be seen in the bottom left hand corner.

The text written sideways in red ink at the top of the page gives information regarding the surah: it was revealed in Makkah and contains 110 verses and 12 *rukus*. The marginal notes in red are *tajweed* rules giving instructions to the reader as an aid to correct recitation.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

مفزع

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ

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وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا فَمَا يَلْبُدُ رَبُّنَا

شَدِيدًا مُزْلِدًا نَهْ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ

يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا

مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا أَوْ يَبْدَأُ الَّذِينَ قَالَهُ

قَالُوا الْحَيَّ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا أَمَا لَهُمْ حُكْمٌ وَلَا

لَا بَأْسَ لَهُمْ كِبَرُتُ كَلِمَةٍ تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ

إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ

نَفْسًا عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا

الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ

رَبِيبَةً لَهُمُ لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَمْ لَا

وَأَنَّا جَعَلْنَا

وَأَنَّا جَعَلْنَا

وَأَنَّا جَعَلْنَا

عَلَّمَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَعَ الْبَيْتِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ الْبَيْتِ
 جَعَلَكُمْ قَتْلَكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَعَ الْبَيْتِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَعَ
 السَّمَاءِ فَاتَّخَذْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَعَكُمْ يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ
 وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى اخْتَضَتْ الْأَرْضُ خَرَابًا
 وَأَنْزَلْنَاهُمْ فِيهَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَذُرُّوا
 عَلَيْهَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَفَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ
 حَصْبَةً أَكَارٍ تَغْرِبُ بِالْأَفْسَادِ كَذَلِكَ
 نَقُصُّ الْأَيَّاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ وَاللَّهُ
 يَعْلَمُ عَوْدَ الْبَاقِ السَّلَامِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَنْتَهِى
 فَتُسَلِّمُ لَهُ لِيَذَرَ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ الْأَشْيَاءِ زِيَادَةً
 وَلَا يَرْتَفِعُ وَجْهُهُمْ فَتَنْزِيلُ
 لَكُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْبَيْتِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَلَدُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسَبِّحُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءً تَسْبِيحًا
 بِمَقَالَتِهَا وَتَرْفَعُهُمْ ذِلَّةً مَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
 مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا أُغْشِيَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فَوَظَلُّوا
 مِنَ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَمِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْبَيْتِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَلَدُونَ



The Challenge in the Qur'an

A literary and linguistic miracle

**“Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created.
He has created man from a leech-like clot.
Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.
Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.
He has taught man that which he knew not.”**

Surah Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 1-5.

These were the first verses of the Qur'an to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over fourteen hundred years ago. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who was known to have been in retreat and meditation in a cave outside Makkah, had received the first revelation of a book that would have a tremendous impact on the world. Not being able to read or write or known to have composed any piece of poetry and not having any special rhetorical gifts, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had just received the beginning of a book that would deal with matters of belief, law, politics, rituals, spirituality, and economics in an entirely new literary form.

This unique literary form is part of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, that led to the dramatic intellectual revival of desert Arabs. Thirteen years after the first revelation, it became the primary reference for a new state in Madinah, providing the new civilisation's political, philosophical, and spiritual outlook. In this chapter, we will begin to examine why the Qur'an is impossible to imitate by reviewing how the language of the Qur'an compares to the normal literary forms of Arabic poetry and prose. Understanding the unique literary form of the Qur'an, provides an essential insight into its miraculous nature.

Human or Divine authorship?

The unique literary form of the Qur'an is the basis to the doctrine of *i'jaz al-Qur'an* (the inimitability of the Qur'an), which lies at the heart of the Qur'an's claim to being of Divine origin. With this in mind there are two approaches that can show that there are fundamental reasons to believe that the Qur'an is a Divine and a miraculous text. The first approach is rational deduction and the second is the philosophy of miracles.

Rational deduction is the thought process where logical conclusions are drawn from a universally accepted statement or provable premises. This process is also called rational inference or logical deduction.

In the context of the Qur'an's uniqueness, the universally accepted statement supported by eastern and western scholarship is:

“The Qur'an was not matched linguistically by the Arabs at the time of revelation.”

From this statement the following logical conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Qur'an could not have come from an Arab as the Arab linguistics par excellence failed to challenge the Qur'an and had even admitted that the Qur'an could have not come from a human being.
2. The Qur'an could not have come from a non-Arabic speaker as the language in the Qur'an is Arabic, and the language is a prerequisite to successfully challenge the Qur'an.



Opposite

Unique manuscript leaf from an early 18th century African Qur'an. Written on fine hand-made paper, in an unusual *hausawi-sudani* variant script with letter-pointing and full vocalisation in red and highlighted with saffron colour. As with most Qur'ans written in *maghribi* script, the writing is dense and compact with wide page margins. The floral medallion in the margin indicates the end of the first *hizb* of the eleventh *juz'*. The verses are separated by small floral shapes outlined in red. The page shows Surah Yunus (Jonah, 10); part of verse 23 to verse 27.

A feature of Qur'anic manuscripts from this region is that they were made portable so they could be easily carried by nomadic tribesman. The pages were generally not sewn together but left unbound and kept loose in a satchel or pouch.

Opposite

A loose page from a Qur'an written during the 18th century on hand-made paper, in *hausawi* script (a variant of the *maghrabi* style) that was common to the Hausa speaking Muslims of West Africa. Decorated in a traditional style local to the region the page contains a large panel in the centre as well as roundels on the right hand margin, coloured using a variety of earth tones; saffron, brown and red inks. Small floral shapes outlined in red indicate the end of each verse. The whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and a few words of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) are written on the page.

3. The Qur'an could not have come from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ due to the following reasons:

a. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was an Arab himself and all the Arabs failed to linguistically match the Qur'an.

b. The Arab linguists never accused the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ of being the author of the Qur'an.

c. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ experienced many trials and tribulations during the course of his Prophetic mission. For example his children died, his beloved wife Khadija (may Allah be well pleased with her) passed away, he was boycotted, his close companions were tortured and killed, yet the literary character of the Qur'an remains the same throughout. Nothing in the Qur'an expresses the turmoil and emotions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It is a psychological and physiological impossibility to go through the events that the Prophet ﷺ went through without it affecting a personal composition and yet none of the emotions are expressed in the literary character of the Qur'an.

d. The verses of the Qur'an were revealed for specific circumstances and events that occurred and they remain without revision or deletion as literary masterpieces. All literary masterpieces usually undergo revision and deletion to ensure literary perfection, however, the Qur'an has remained the same since its revelation.

e. The *hadith* (narrations) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are in a totally different style than to that of the Qur'an. How can any human being express themselves orally over a twenty three year period in two distinct styles?

4. The Qur'an could not have come from another being such as a *jinn* because the knowledge of their existence is from the Qur'an. Knowledge of their existence is based upon revelation and not on any empirical evidence. Therefore, if someone claims that the source of the Qur'an to be another being such as *jinn*, then they would have to prove their existence independently from the Qur'an.

If the Qur'an were used to establish the existence of *jinn* then this would mean the whole rational deduction exercise would not be required in the first place, as the Qur'an would already have been established as a Divine text because to believe in *jinn* would mean belief in the Qur'an in the first place.

5. This leaves us with the fact that the Qur'an could only have come from a Divine source, as it is the only logical source. All other explanations have to be discarded as they do not explain the uniqueness of the Qur'an in a comprehensive and coherent manner.

What is a miracle?

The word miracle is derived from the Latin word 'miraculum' meaning "something wonderful". A miracle is commonly defined as a violation of natural law (*lex naturalis*); however this is an incoherent definition. This incoherence is due to our understanding of natural laws. As Bilynskyj observes "...so long as natural laws are conceived of as universal inductive generalisations, the notion of violation of a natural law is incoherent." ¹

Natural laws are inductive generalisations of patterns we observe in the universe. For clarification; induction, also known as inductive reasoning or inductive logic, is a type of reasoning which involves moving from a set of specific facts to a general conclusion. It can also be seen as a form of theory-building, in which specific facts are used to create a theory that explains relationships between the facts and allows prediction of future knowledge. Induction is employed, for example, in using specific propositions such as: all ice I have ever touched was cold. Hence all ice is cold. Problems may occur where hasty inductive generalisations proceed from a premise about a sample to a conclusion about the population. To give a very simple example; a quarter of the pupils in a class are left handed. Therefore, a quarter of the towns population must also be left handed.

Furthermore, if the definition of a miracle is a violation of this natural law, in other words a violation of the patterns we observe in the universe, then an obvious dilemma occurs. The dilemma is that why can't we take this perceived violation of the pattern as part of the pattern itself? Hence, a more coherent description of a miracle is not a 'violation' but an 'impossibility'. William Lane Craig rejects the definition of a miracle as a "violation of a natural law" and replaces it with the coherent definition of "events which lie outside the productive capacity of nature".² In summary, this means that miracles are acts of impossibilities concerning causal or logical connections.

سورة العنكبوت مدينية وهر سبع اية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
الصِّرَاطَ الَّذِي بَرَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ هُمْ غَيْرِ الْ
مَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ آمِينَ



سورة البقرة مدنية وهر مائت وخمس وثمان اية

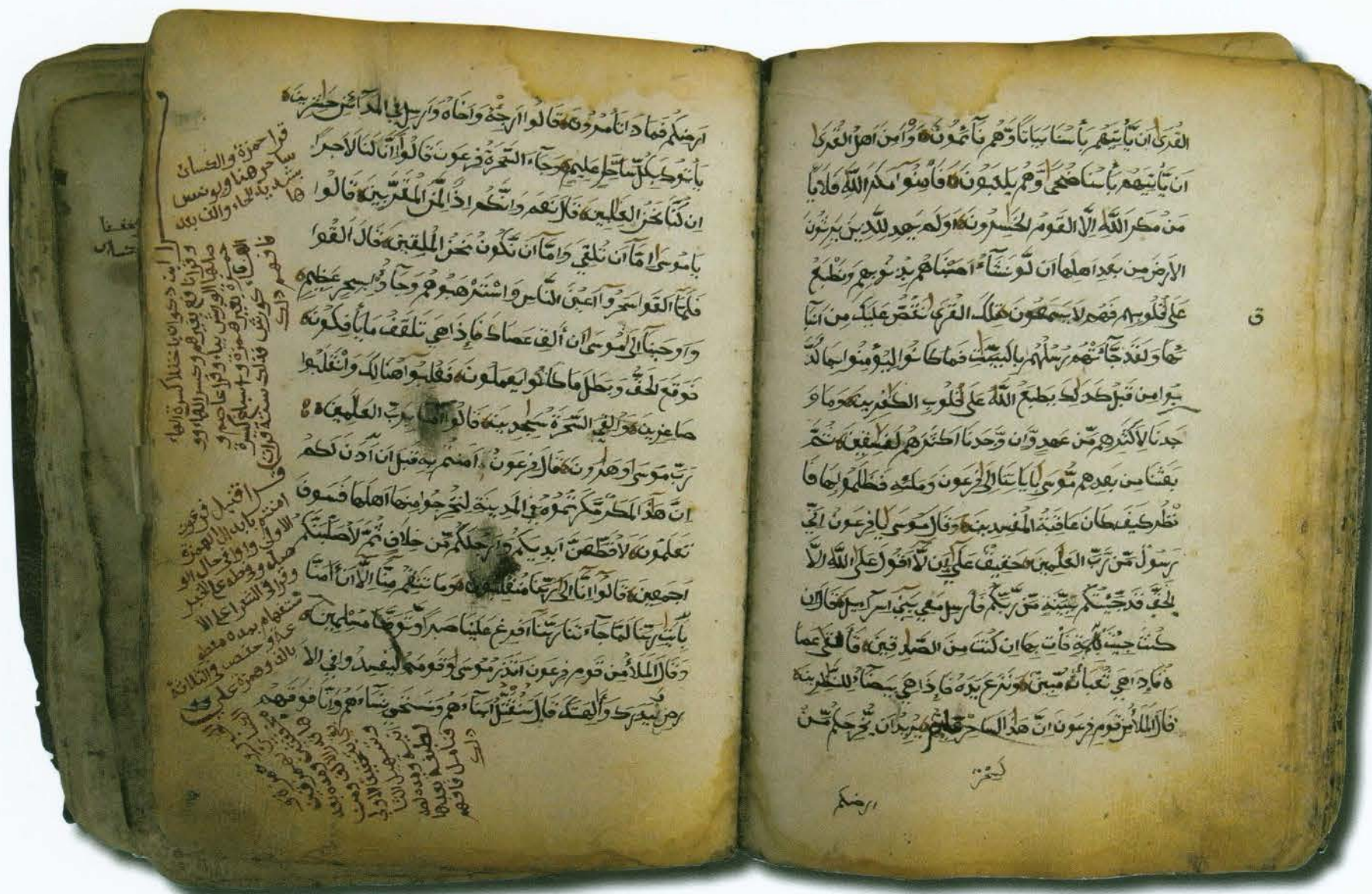
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَتَبَ لَنَا

هَدَى





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدانا لهذا
وَمَا كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ



الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
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وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
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وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَقْتُولُونَ

Arabic literary forms

Classical scholars such as al-Baillani and al-Rummani view the Qur'an as having its own unique literary form.³ This view is also supported by western scholarship which can be found in the writings of famous orientalist scholars such as Arthur J. Arberry, Professor Bruce Lawrence and D.J. Stewart.⁴ Every expression of the Arabic language falls into the literary forms of prose and poetry. There are other 'sub' forms that fall into the above categories such as *kahin*; a sub-form of rhymed prose. However, all literary forms can be categorised as either prose or poetry. According to Muslim and Non-Muslim scholarship, however, the Qur'an cannot be described as any one of these known forms of Arabic speech.

1. What is Arabic poetry?

Poetry is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its apparent meaning. Poetry may be written independently, as discrete poems or may occur in conjunction with other arts; as in poetic drama, hymns, lyrics or prose poetry. Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions to suggest alternative meanings in the words, or to evoke emotional or sensual responses. Devices such as assonance (repetition of vowel sounds), alliteration (repetition of consonants), onomatopoeia (is a word that imitates or suggests the source of the sound that it describes) and rhythm are sometimes used to achieve musical or incantatory effects. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations. Similarly, metaphor, simile and metonymy create a resonance between otherwise disparate images.

In Arabic, poetry (*ash-shi'r ul-arabiya*) is a form of metrical speech⁵ with a rhyme. The rhyme (*qafiyah*) in Arabic poetry is achieved by every line of the poem ending upon a specific letter. The metrical aspect of Arabic poetry is due to its rhythmical pattern (*arud*). Arabic poetry has sixteen rhythmical patterns called '*al-bihar*', literally meaning 'The Seas' in Arabic. This term has been used to describe the rhythmical divisions as a result of the way the poem moves according to its rhythm, just like the waves in the sea.

The following is a list of the rhythmical patterns, which all Arabic poetry adheres to, or is loosely based upon; *at-tawil*; *al-bassit*; *al-wafir*; *al-kamil*; *ar-rajs*; *al-khafif*; *al-hazaj*; *al-muttakarib*; *al-munsarih*; *al-muktatab*; *al-mutadarak*; *al-madid*; *al-mujtath*; *al-ramel*; *al-khabab*; *as-saria*'.

Each one of the *al-bihar* has a unique rhythmical pattern. The *al-bihar* were first codified in the 8th century by al-Khalil ibn Ahmad and have changed little since. The *al-bihar* are based on the length of syllables. A literary analysis of any Arabic poem will conclude that it adheres to, or is based upon, these rhythmical patterns. This is supported by Louis Cheikho who collected pre-Islamic and post-Islamic poetry and concluded that all of the poems conformed and were based upon the *al-bihar*.⁶ An example of Arabic poetry is the ancient Arabian poem called 'Abu-l'Ata of Sind':

"Of thee did I dream, while spears between us were quivering and sooth of our blood full drop had drunken the tawny shafts I know not, by heaven I swear and true is the word I say this pang is it love sickness or a spell from thee if it be a spell, then grant me grace of my love-longing if the other the sickness be then none
is the guilt of thine."⁷

2. What is Arabic prose?

Prose is the ordinary form of written language and everyday speech. The word 'prose' is derived from the Latin *prosa*, which literally means 'straightforward'. Prose is therefore, adopted for the discussion of facts, topical reading, as it is often articulated in free form writing style. Thus, it may be used for books, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias and so on. Prose lacks the formal structure of meter (the basic rhythmic structure of a verse) which is typical of poetry; instead it is composed of full sentences, usually divided into paragraphs and then smaller segments known as meta-paragraphs. Some works of prose can contain traces of metrical structure, so a blend of the two forms of literature is known as a 'prose poem'.

Opposite

A Qur'an from the African Horn region written in a compact *sahrawi* script, 18th century. The top image shows that the binding is heavily damaged and the opening surah is missing. The first few verses of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) are circled by a single rough line. The bottom image shows Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights, 7), starting from the 3rd word of verse 97 and ending on the second to last word of verse 127. The body text is written in black ink and annotated with additional commentary in the margin in dark red.

In Arabic, prose can be described as non-metrical speech; which means that it does not have a consistent rhythmical pattern like poetry. Arabic prose can be divided into two categories; *saj'* which is rhymed prose and *mursal* which is straight prose or 'normal speech'.

Saj'

In his book, *Ulum al-Qur'an* (An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an), Von Denffer, provides the following description of *saj'*: "A literary form with some emphasis on rhythm and rhyme, but distinct from poetry. *Saj'* is not really as sophisticated as poetry, but has been employed by Arab poets, and is the best known of the pre-Islamic Arab prosodies. It is distinct from poetry in its lack of meter, i.e. it does not have a consistent rhythmical pattern and it shares with poetry the element of rhyme, though in many cases somewhat irregularly employed."⁸

Although *saj'* differs from poetry in that it lacks a consistent rhythmical pattern, there is some form of pattern based upon the accent in each division of *saj'*. Accent based rhythmical patterns are based upon stresses rather than the number of syllables. Additionally *saj'* is distinct from poetry and other forms of Arabic speech due to its concentrated use of rhetorical features.⁹ Rhetorical features are literary and linguistic devices intended to please or persuade, that differ from normal speech. Examples of rhetorical features include sound, rhythm, ellipsis and grammatical shift (*iltifaat*).¹⁰

In summary the definition of *saj'* is that it has a,
i) Accent based (or stress-timed) rhythmical pattern
ii) End rhyme
iii) Concentrated use of rhetorical features

Mursal

Mursal can be defined as a literary form that goes on, but is continued straight throughout without any divisions, either of rhyme or of anything else. *Mursal* is meant as a way of expression that closely resembles everyday spoken language. Examples can be seen in speeches and prayers intended to encourage or motivate the masses.

In summary the definition of *mursal* is that it has,

- i) No rhythmical pattern
- ii) No rhyme
- iii) A resemblance to straight forward speech

Why is the Qur'an a Miracle?

What makes the Qur'an a miracle, is that it is impossible for a human being to compose something like it, as it lies outside the productive capacity of the nature of the Arabic language. The productive capacity of nature, concerning the Arabic language, is that any grammatically sound expression of the Arabic language will always fall within the known Arabic literary forms of prose and poetry. All of the possible combinations of Arabic words, letters and grammatical rules have been exhausted and yet its literary form has not been matched linguistically. The Arabs, who were known to have been Arabic linguists *par excellence*, failed to successfully challenge the Qur'an. Forster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot, who was a notable British Orientalist and translator, states:

"...and that though several attempts have been made to produce a work equal to it as far as elegant writing is concerned, none has as yet succeeded."¹¹

The implication of this is that there is no link between the Qur'an and the Arabic language; however this seems impossible because the Qur'an is made up of the Arabic language. On the other hand, every combination of Arabic words and letters have been used to try and imitate the Qur'an. Therefore, this leaves only one conclusion; a Divine explanation is the only coherent explanation for this impossible Arabic literary form – the Qur'an. Hence, it logically follows that if the Qur'an is a literary event that lies outside the productive capacity of the Arabic language, i.e. an impossibility, then by definition, it is a miracle.

ارضكم فماد انتمرون قالوا الرجعة واخاه وارسل في المداخن حشيرة
 يا توك بكل ساحر عليهم رجاء السحرة فزعون قالوا ان لنا لاجرا
 ان كنا نخر العليين فلا نعم وانكم اذ المنز المقتربين قالوا
 يا موسى اما ان تلقى واما ان تكون نخر الملقين قال القوا
 فلما القوا سحر واعين الناس واشتره بوم وجا واسبغ عظيم
 وارجينا الى موسى ان الق عصاك فاذا هي تلقف ما يا فكونه
 فوق الحف وتطل ما كانوا يعملون فغلبوا صالك وانقلبوا
 صاعرين والقي السحرة سجدين قالوا اما رب العلمين
 رب موسى وهرون قال فزعون امنتم به قبل ان اذن لكم
 ان هذا المكر مكر ثمود في المدينة لتخرجوا منها اهلها فسوف
 تعلمون لا قطعن ايديكم وارجلكم تن خلاف ثم لا صلبكم
 اجمعين قالوا انا الى ربنا منقلبون وما تنقم منا الا ان امنا
 يا ربنا لما جاءتنا ربنا افرغ علينا صبرا وثوقا مسلمين
 وقال الملا من قوم فزعون اتذر موسى وقومه ليفسدوا في الارض
 من يدرك والفتك قال سنقتل ابناءهم ونسخي نسائهم ونفقتهم

قرا حمزة والعشائر
 ساجد حرمنا ويونس
 بشديد الحاء والف بعد

قرا حمزة والعشائر
 ساجد حرمنا ويونس
 بشديد الحاء والف بعد

قرا حمزة والعشائر
 ساجد حرمنا ويونس
 بشديد الحاء والف بعد

مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُنُوتِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
سَبِّحْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ
مَقْعًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ
ثُمَّ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ
صَغَارًا أَنَّهُمْ بُيَئَتْ مَرُوضَةً وَارْتَدَّ قَا
لُ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَوَدُّونَنِي
وَأَنْتُمْ كَاذِبُونَ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمُ فَلَمَّا
رَأَوْا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَآلَهُ لَا يَهْدِي

Loose leaves copied in *sahrawi* script using a thick nib from the Horn of Africa, 18th century. The page shows the start of the third to last word at the end of Surah al-Mumtahanah (The Woman to be examined, 60) and the last letter of the fourth to last word (*kuffaari min*) and continues into Surah as-Saff (The Row or the Rank, 61) and ends in the middle of the third to last word of the fifth verse on the word '*laa yahdil-qawm*'.

The challenge in the Qur'an

In the following verses Allah has challenged the whole of mankind to try and produce a single chapter like the Qur'an. This challenge, which has remained unmet, captivated the minds of the Arabs at the time of revelation. They rationally assessed that if an Arab cannot challenge the Qur'an and nor could a non-Arab, then the only source of the Qur'an is the Creator. The Qur'an states:

"If you are in doubt of what We have revealed to Our Messenger, then produce one chapter like it, call upon all your helpers, besides Allah, if you are truthful."

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 23.

"Or do they say: 'He (Prophet Muhammad, ﷺ) has forged it (this Qur'an)?' Nay! They believe not! Let them then produce a recitation like it (the Qur'an) if they are truthful."

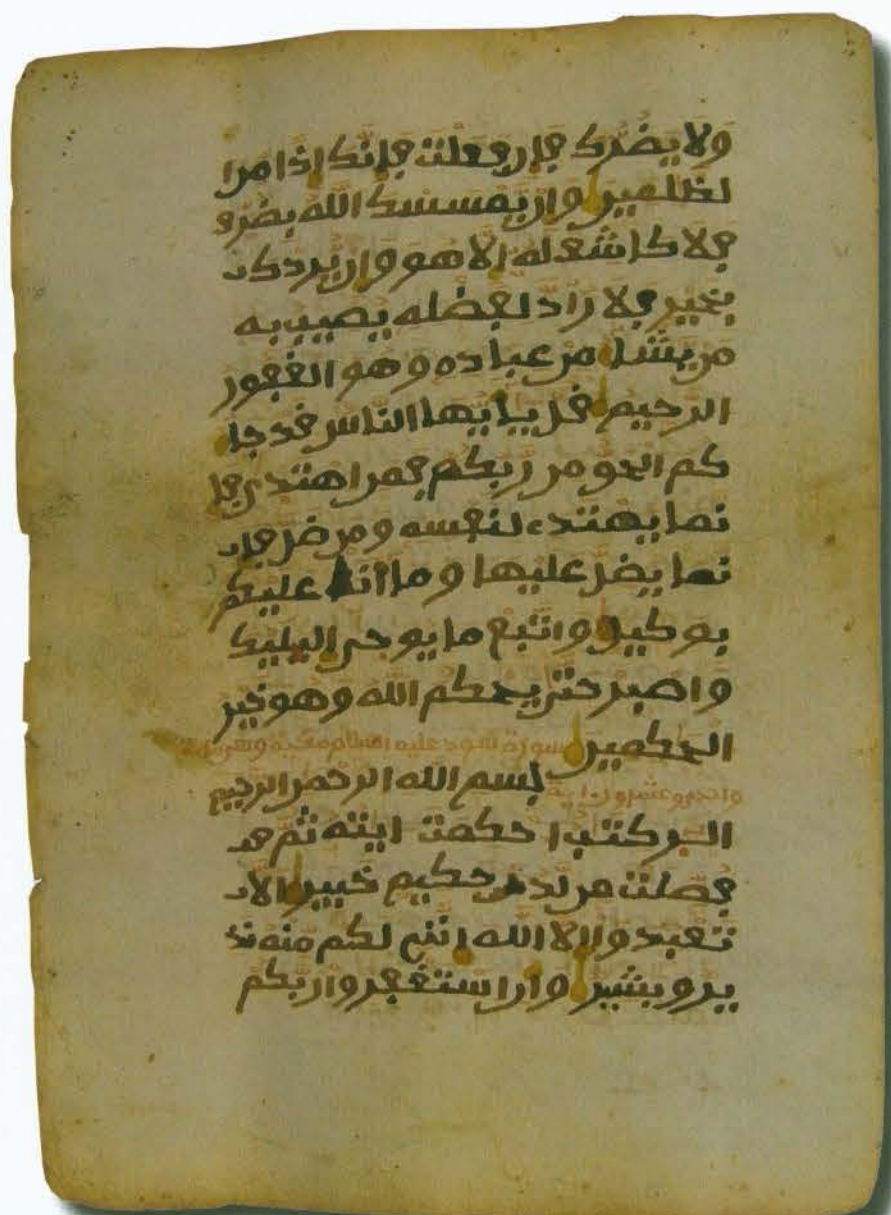
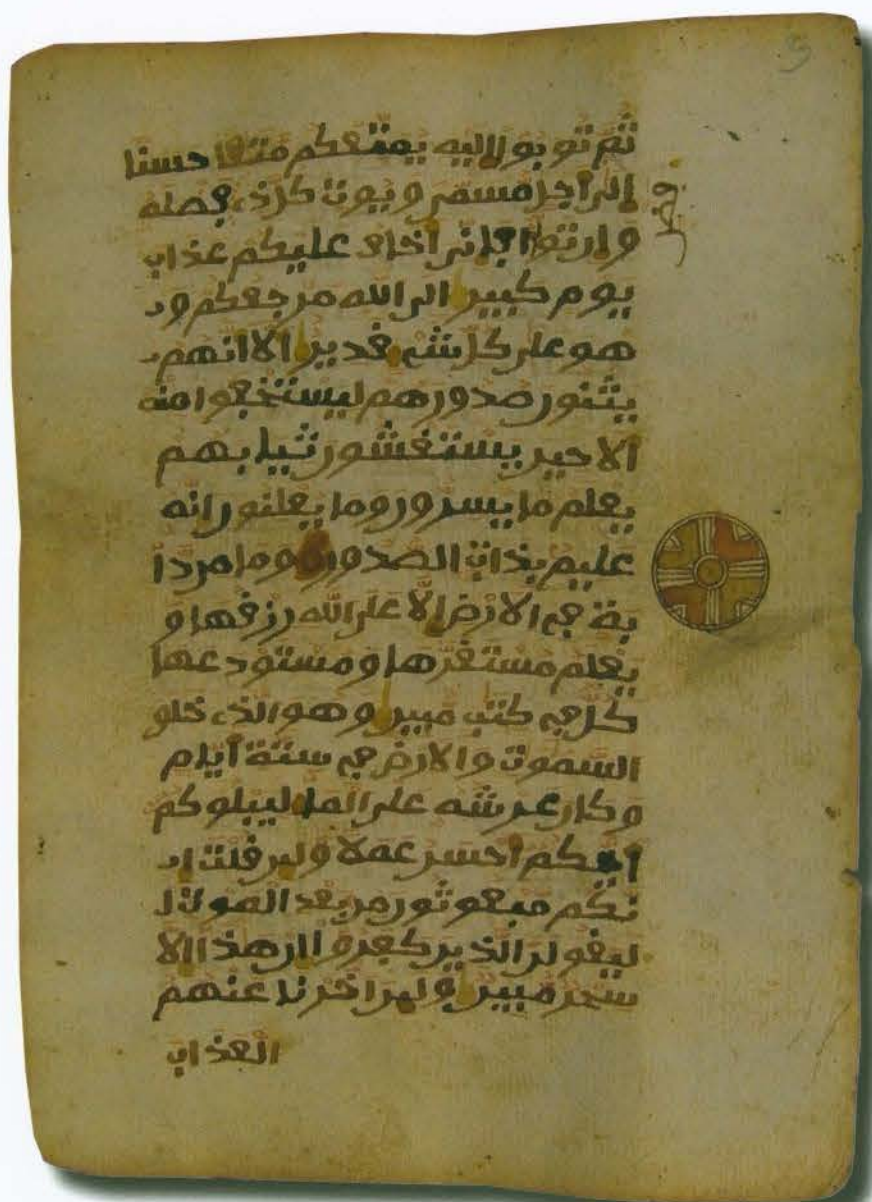
Surah at-Toor (The Mount) 52: 33-34.

According to Qur'anic commentators such as Ibn Kathir, Suyuti and Ibn Abbas, these verses issue a challenge to produce a chapter that imitates the unique literary form of the Qur'an.¹² The tools needed to meet this challenge are the finite grammatical rules and the twenty eight letters that make-up the Arabic alphabet; these are independent and objective measures available to all. The fact that it has not been matched since it was revealed does not surprise scholars familiar with the Arabic language and that of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an was revealed over 1430 years ago and the challenge to produce something like the Qur'an has remained to this day. Throughout the centuries, thinkers, poets, theologians and literary critics have attempted to challenge the Qur'an. Some of these challengers in the past have included: Musaylamah; Ibn Al-Mukaffa; Yahya ibn Al-Hakam al-Ghazal; Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad; Bassar ibn Burd.

Without going into an extensive analysis of why Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have agreed that those who have attempted to challenge the Qur'an have failed, the following summary should suffice. Even though the challengers have had the same set of 'tools', which are the twenty eight Arabic letters, finite grammatical rules and the blue print of the challenge – which is the Qur'an itself; they have failed to:

1. Replicate the Qur'an's literary form
2. Match the unique linguistic nature of the Qur'an
3. Select and arrange words like that of the Qur'an
4. Select and arrange similar grammatical particles
5. Match the Qur'an's superior eloquence and sound
6. Equal the frequency of rhetorical devices
7. Match the level of content and informativeness
8. Equal the Qur'an's conciseness and flexibility



Loose manuscript leaves from an early 18th century Qur'an. Written on hand-made paper, in *hausawi-sudani* style script common to much of sub-Saharan Africa. The right hand page contains Surah Yunus (Jonah, 10) verses 106 to the end and the start of Surah Hud (Prophet Hud, 11) ending part way through verse 8 on the left. The folios make use of traditional orange-red and yellow colour for the vowels and verse separators. A large circular marginal ornament marks the start of the thirteenth *juz'*.

The following few lines shows a translation of Musaylamah's attempt to challenge the Qur'an by trying to write something similar to Surah al-Feel (The Elephant, 105). Another important point to consider here is that the miracle of the Qur'an is the Arabic language itself. So when the Qur'an is translated into another language, although the general meaning becomes apparent, the actual miracle is lost.

The elephant.

What is the elephant?

And who shall tell you what the elephant is?

He has a ropy tail and a long trunk.

This is a [mere] trifle of our Lord's creations.

It can be clearly seen, with reference to the Arabic original, that the style of Musaylamah's speech is in the *kahin* style of rhymed prose. It lacks informativeness and the words and phrases that have been used can be replaced with other words that will express greater meaning as well as producing a more eloquent discourse. In stark contrast, the words of the Qur'an are such that they cannot be replaced by something else.

Hence, from a literary and stylistic point of view, this attempt failed to replicate the Qur'an. The totality of every chapter is a special characteristic of the Qur'an, each having its own unique form and its unique use of literary devices. The Qur'an's inimitable eloquence is based upon:

- Eloquent use of language to please and persuade;
- Its perfect choice of words expressions with the best of verbal forms;
- Accuracy of meaning;
- Apt selection of pronouns and rhetorical devices;
- Interrelation between style, structure and meaning.

The list above is not exhaustive and represents just some of the reasons why it has not been possible to emulate the Qur'an to this day.



The Qur'an is impossible to match linguistically

The inability to produce anything like the Qur'an, due to its unique literary form, is the essence of the Qur'anic miracle. The argument posed by Muslim theologians and philosophers is that if, with the finite set of Arabic linguistic tools at humanity's disposal, there is no effective challenge, then providing a naturalistic explanation for the Qur'an's uniqueness is incoherent and doesn't explain its inimitability. This is because a human author is only able to produce the known literary forms in the Arabic language. The development of an entirely new literary form is beyond the scope of the natural capacity of any human author, hence a Divine entity, Allah, is the only sufficient comprehensive explanation. The evidence for this is that for over a millennia, the speech and writings of the Arabs have always fallen within the known forms and expressions of the Arabic language. However, the Qur'an breaks this natural pattern due to its uniqueness. Taha Husayn, a prominent Egyptian litterateur, in a public lecture summarised how the Qur'an achieves its own unique form:

"But you know that the Qur'an is not prose and that it is not verse either. It is rather Qur'an, and it cannot be called by any other name but this. It is not verse, and that is clear; for it does not bind itself to the bonds of verse. And it is not prose, for it is bound by bonds peculiar to itself, not found elsewhere; some of the binds are related to the endings of its verses, and some to that musical sound which is all its own.

It is therefore neither verse nor prose, but it is "a Book whose verses have been perfected and expounded, from One Who is Wise, All-Aware." We cannot therefore say it is prose, and its text itself is not verse. It has been one of a kind, and nothing like it has ever preceded or followed it." ¹³

Hence, the Qur'an is truly a unique expression of the Arabic language. Nothing has come before or after it that can match its literary form and style. This next section will discuss how the Qur'an compares to Arabic poetry and prose.

Pages from an 18th century African Qur'an, most likely from Ethiopia, written in a local style. The pages show the beginning of Surah Yunus (Jonah, 10).

Unbound Qur'an leaf
written in a *hausawi-sudani*
variant script, 18th century.
Written using a thick pen
with typical use of saffron
colour for the vowel scheme
local to the region. There
is also a traditional African
framework design for the
marginal ornament rather
than the common circular
devices. The page starts with
part of verse 183 from Surah
al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2).

Is the Qur'an poetry?

The Qur'an cannot be simply described as poetry because the totality of each surah does not conform to any of the *al-bihar* and in many places does not exhibit the same regular rhythmic patterns of the *al-bihar*. Surah al-Kawthar (A River in Paradise, 108) is a good example to show how the Qur'an is not Arabic poetry:



Inna a'tayna kal kawthar

Verily, We have granted you al-Kawthar.

Fasalli li rabbika wanhar

Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.

Inna shani-aka huwal abtar

For he who hates you, he will be cut off.

The syllables of these verses do not correspond to any pattern similar to the *al-bihar* of Arabic poetry. In fact, there is no syllabic rhythmic pattern in this surah. Mohammad Khalifa in *The Authorship of the Qur'an* concludes, "Readers familiar with Arabic poetry realize that it has long been distinguished by its *wazn*, *bahr*, *arud* and *qafiyah* (i.e. exact measures of syllabic sounds and rhymes), which have to be strictly adhered to even at the expense of grammar and a shade of meaning at times. All of this is categorically different from Qur'anic literary style." ¹⁴

Is the Qur'an ordinary prose (*mursal*)?

As discussed previously Arabic prose can be defined either as rhymed (*saj'*) or normal speech (*mursal*). If we compare *mursal* with the Qur'an, we find that the construction of the Qur'an is not just straightforward speech. This is due to the use of rhyme, rhythm, depth of meaning and unique stylistic features abundant throughout the Qur'an. *Mursal* is just normal speech that does not employ any of the above features. A superficial analysis on Surah al-Kawthar will conclude that it cannot be described as normal speech.



Inna a'tayna kal kawthar

Fasalli li rabbika wanhar

Inna shani-aka huwal abtar

These verses employ an end rhyme as can be seen by the letters in red. The repetition of the ending 'ka' (you) is responsible for creating the chapter's rhythm. By highlighting just this surah's rhyme and rhythm, clearly shows that the Qur'an is not straightforward speech.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ وَإِذَا
مَأْمُورُونَ فَمَنْ كَانَتْ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى
الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِائَةِ
مَسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ
فِيهِ الْفُرْقَانُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ
الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمْ
الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ مَرِيضًا
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ
وَسِتُّ كُمْ الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ
عَلَى مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ عِبَادًا عَنِ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا
أَجْنِبًا دَغْوَةً أَلْهَاهُمْ إِذَا دُعِيَ
لَهُ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا



السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

صَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَكُمْ مِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ شُرَكَاءَ
فِي مَا نَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ
نَقُصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ^ط بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَ مُنْ بَغَايِرِ عِلْمٍ
فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَالَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ^ط فَأَقْبِرْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
وَفِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَ
لَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ^ط مُبَيِّنًا إِلَيْهِمْ وَانْقُضُوا وَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ إِنَّ الدِّينَ فَرَّقُوا

دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلٌّ حَزَبٌ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ^ط وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسُ ضُرٌّ
دَعَاؤُهُمْ مُبَيِّنِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِحُوا مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ
لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمْنَعُوا فُسُوقَ تَعْلَمُونَ ^ط أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَاهُمْ سُلْطَانًا
فَهُوَ يَنْكَرُكُمْ ^ط بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ ^ط وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا
بِهَا وَإِنْ نَصَبْنَاهُمْ سِيبَةً بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ ^ط أَوْ لَمْ يَبْرَأُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ مِنَ السَّبِيلِ

Is the Qur'an rhymed prose (*saj'*)?

The Qur'an has its own unique form so it cannot be described as the normal rhymed prose that is evident in other works of Arabic literature. There are three major opinions based upon modern and classical scholarship on how the Qur'an achieves its own unique literary form of rhymed prose or *saj'*:

1. Unique fusion of metrical and non-metrical speech

The Qur'an achieves this unique literary form by fusing together metrical and non-metrical speech. This fusion of metrical and non-metrical composition is present throughout the whole of the Qur'an and cannot be found in any Arabic text, past or present.¹⁵ This is summarised by the famous Arabic literary scholar Arthur J. Arberry, "For the Koran is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both."¹⁶

2. The Qur'an transcends *saj'*

The Qur'an shares similar features with *saj'*, specifically in the early Makkan surahs, but it completely transcends many aspects of what defines *saj'*. What makes the Qur'an unique in this context is:

a. Greater tendency to mono-rhyme

The Qur'an differs from *saj'* due to its use of mono-rhyme, meaning that its rhyming scheme conforms to a few rhymes rather than a selection of many rhymes. According to one analysis, just over half of the Qur'an ends with the same letter.¹⁷ This particular use of rhyme, in a text the size of the Qur'an, has not been replicated in any Arabic text. Devin J. Stewart states:

*"Qur'anic saj' has a much greater tendency to mono-rhyme than does later saj'. A small number of rhymes... are predominant in the Qur'an whereas rhyme in later saj' shows greater variation."*¹⁸

b. Does not conform to a particular style

The general description of *saj'* is that it has an end rhyme. However, the Qur'an does not conform to a constant or consistent rhyme, which reflects the work of ar-Rummani¹⁹ who states that the Qur'an's use of language is semantically orientated and does not conform to a particular style. Semantically orientated means the use of language is driven by meaning, in other words the message that is being portrayed, in contrast to the language of the poets when they used words and phrases primarily for sound and rhythm rather than any coherent meaning.

This is also reflected by Devin J. Stewart's analysis, he states, *"The Qur'an allows inexact rhymes which are not found in later saj'"*²⁰

c. Greater range of *saj'* phrases

The divisions of *saj'* or single phrases of *saj'* are called *saj'aat*.²¹ The Qur'an differs from normal *saj'* as it has a greater range of short and long *saj'aat*. Devin J. Stewart states, *"Both in the Qur'an and in later saj' we see that shorter saj' is much more common, but the range in the Qur'an is greater."*²²

Opposite

A rare Qur'an leaf from Herat or Bukhara, late 16th century. The page is partitioned into a number of compartments that has allowed the calligrapher to display their skills in terms of symmetry, layout and design. There are twelve lines of small variant *naskh* script sandwiched in between larger lines of *muhaqqaq* script written in gold coloured ink. Text and vocalisation is in black with a few textual markers in red. Verses are separated by round markers placed above the line. The illustrations in the side compartments are for decorative purposes. The page shows Surah ar-Room (The Romans, 30) starting with part of verse 27 and ending with verse 48 on the reverse side.

Opposite

Another classical example of a brightly illustrated Qur'an leaf from the Herat region, late 16th century. There are fifteen lines to the page with the first, eighth and last line written in gold *muhaqqaq* script with the remaining lines written in a small black variant *naskh* script. The marginal devices would appear to be for decorative purposes only. The page shows Surah Luqmaan (31) starting on part of verse 14 through to part of verse 23 at the bottom of the leaf.

d. Higher frequency of rhetorical features

The Qur'an is a 'sea of rhetoric'. The Qur'an exhibits an unparalleled frequency of rhetorical features, surpassing any other Arabic text, classical or modern.²³ The use of rhetoric in the Qur'an stands out from any other type of discourse.²⁴ The following examples show that the Qur'an employs a wider range and frequency of rhetorical features than any other rhymed prose; past or present.

i. Alliteration.

This is a literary or rhetorical stylistic device that consists of repeating the same consonant sound within several words in close succession. For example repetition of *kum* in the following verse:

يُصَلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

"He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins.

And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great achievement."

Surah al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 33: 71.

Another example of alliteration occurs in Surah al-Mursalaat when the letter *meem* is repeated in quick succession:

أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَّاءٍ مَرِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

"Did We not create you from a despised water?"

Surah al-Mursalaat (Those sent forth) 77: 20.

ii. Analogy

This can be a spoken or textual comparison between two words (or sets of words) to highlight some form of semantic similarity between them. For example:

"And cushions set in rows. And rich carpets spread out."

Surah al-Ghaashiyah (The Overwhelming) 88: 15-16.

"Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression. And repulse not the beggar."

Surah ad-Duhaa (The Forenoon) 93: 9-10.

iii. Antiphrasis

This is a figure of speech that is used to mean the opposite of its usual sense, especially ironically. For example:

"Then pour over his head the torment of boiling water. Taste you (this)! Verily, you were (pretending to be) the mighty, the generous!"

Surah ad-Dukhaan (The Smoke) 44: 48-49.

iv. Antithesis

This is a counter-proposition and denotes a direct contrast to the original proposition. For example:

"Those who disbelieve, theirs will be a severe torment; and those who believe and do righteous good deeds, theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward."

Surah Faatir (The Originator of Creation) 35: 7.

حَمَلْنَاهُ أَمَةً وَهَنَّا عَلَى هَرَفٍ وَضَالَهُ فِي غَامِيزٍ أَنْ تَشْكُرَ

يَا وَلَدُكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ۚ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا
تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ
فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۚ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِنَّكَ مُشْقَاةٌ جَنَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ
فَذُكُنْ فِي صُحُفٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَا أَيُّهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ
خَبِيرٌ ۚ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ اقْصُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَامْرُؤًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ
مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ۚ وَلَا تَصْعَقْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمُشْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

مَرَحًا أَنْ لَيْسَ بِكَ كَدُّ مُحْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ وَاقْصِدْ

مَشِيكَ وَلَغُضْضٍ مِنْ صَوْنِكَ إِنَّ أَزْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيدِ ۚ
أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَاءَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَبْعَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَةً
ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ
مُنِيرٍ ۚ وَإِذْ أَقِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاؤُنَا
أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ
لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ۚ

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم

[illegible]

v. Asyndeton

This term is used for a stylistic scheme in which conjunctions are deliberately omitted from a series of related clauses. For example in the following verses the subject matter switches within the same verse without any linkage:

“Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see.

Then, He rose above the Throne.

He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running (its course) for a term appointed.

He manages and regulates all affairs; He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail, that you may believe with certainty in the Meeting with your Lord.”

Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 2.

vi. Assonance

A refrain of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences, For example the words *ee yaa bahum* and *hesaa bahum* in the following two verses:

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ۖ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ۚ

“Verily, to Us will be their return; Then verily, for Us will be their reckoning.”

Surah al-Ghaashiyah (The Overwhelming) 88: 25-26.

vii. Cadence

Cadence is the rhythmic rise or fall of the voice when a text is read aloud. This powerful feature is one of the most beautiful attractions of the Qur'an and is present throughout. It is a major phonetic and cohesive element which makes the Qur'an impossible to imitate. No other text has done this before, especially in such frequency and in combination with assonance and the many other phonetic devices such as assimilation, nasalisation, etc.

viii. Chiasmus

In rhetoric, chiasmus is the figure of speech in which two or more clauses are related to each other through a reversal of structures in order to make a larger point, for example:

“You make the night to enter into the day, and You make the day to enter into the night,

You bring the living out of the dead and, You bring the dead out of the living.

And You give wealth and sustenance to whom You will, without limit.”

Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan) 3: 27.

ix. Epizeuxis

In linguistics, an epizeuxis is the repetition of words in immediate succession, for vehemence or emphasis. For example in Surah ash-Sharh we read:

“Verily, along with every hardship is relief, verily, along with every hardship is relief.”

Surah ash-Sharh (The Opening Forth) 94: 5-6.

x. Equivoque

This is the use of a term with more than one meaning or sense. For example use of the word 'mountains' in the following verse:

“See you not that Allah drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them; and He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, and strikes therewith whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.”

Surah an-Noor (The Light) 24: 43.

Close-up view of a page from a simple Indian Qur'an, 17th century. The body text is enclosed within a framework of ruled red and black lines. Verses are written in *naskh* script without separation. The surah header panel in red ink indicates the start of Surah Ibraheem (Abraham, 14) and the fact that its revelation took place in Makkah and that there are fifty two verses in the surah.

عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ

مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ
فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ
بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ • فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا آبَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا
بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَّ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ • فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ

إِنَّمَا هُمْ كُفَّارٌ رَأَوْا آبَاءَهُمْ سَبَّحُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي قَدْ

خَلَقَ فِي عِبَادِهِ **سُورَةُ فَصَّلَتْ** وَخَيْرٌ **أَرْبَعٌ وَعِشْرُونَ** هَذَا كَالْكَافِرِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

حَمْدٌ نَزَّلَ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ • كِتَابٌ فَصَّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ • بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي لُكْنَةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا

xi. Homonymy

This is a group of words, that share the same spelling and the same pronunciation but can have a different meaning. For example, in the following verse the word *makara* can have both good and bad meaning. In the context of the verse we see the evil plotting and planning of those who wished to kill Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as opposed to Allah's plan to protect Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).



“And they (disbelievers) plotted (to kill Jesus), and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of those who plan.”

Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan) 3: 54.

xii. Hyperbole

A term for when statements that are deliberately exaggerated to underline a point. For example:

“Verily, those who deny Our verses and treat them with arrogance, for them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle (which is impossible).”

Thus do We recompense the *Mujrimun* (criminals, polytheists, sinners).”

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 40.

“When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached to the throats, and you were harbouring doubts about Allah.”

Surah al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 33: 10.

xiii. Isocolon

A figure of speech in which parallelism is reinforced. For example:

“Let the rich man spend according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease. And many a town (population) revolted against the Command of its Lord and His Messengers; and We called it to a severe account, and We shall punish it with a horrible torment (in Hell in the Hereafter). So it tasted the evil result of its affair (disbelief), and the consequence of its affair (disbelief) was loss (destruction in this life and an eternal punishment in the Hereafter). Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. So fear Allah and keep your duty to Him, O men of understanding, who have believed! Allah has indeed sent down to you a Reminder (this Qur'an).”

Surah at-Talaaq (The Divorce) 65: 7-10.

xiv. Metaphor

A metaphor is a term that concisely compares two things, saying that one is like the other. For example:

“And We shall turn to whatever deeds they (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners) did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.”

Surah al-Furqaan (The Criterion) 25: 23.

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower to them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: “My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.”

Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night) 17: 23-24.

Opposite

A resplendent Qur'an page dated to around the 17th century with Arabic text written in two different scripts from the Indian subcontinent. The calligrapher has used large lines of *muhaqqaq* for the first, middle and last lines, with four lines of *naskh* in between. Small floral designs act as verse separators and coloured marginal ornaments. The pages show part of verse 82 of Surah al-Ghafir (The Forgiver, 40) through to the end of the surah half way down the page where the next surah, al-Fussilat (Explained in Detail, 41) starts. Note how the last few words of Surah al-Ghafir are integrated within the header of Surah al-Fussilat.

Detail view of a decorative Qur'an copied in India by a highly skilled scribe, 18th century. The page shows the beginning of Surah al-Israa (The Journey by Night, 17) enclosed within a floral chain border surrounded by other extensive foliate designs in a variety of bright colours.

xv. Metonymy

This device is used in rhetoric in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept. So for example in the following verse when describing the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), the Arabic word for ark or ship is not in the verse but is implied by Allah's mention of planks and nails:

"And We carried him on a (ship) made of planks and nails"

Surah al-Qamar (The Moon) 54: 13.

xvi. Palindrome

This is a word or phrase that can be read both forwards and backwards, for example 'race car' or 'radar'. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was unlettered, so for him to construct palindromes in the Qur'an such as these would have been a very lengthy task of trial and error, especially when we consider that the Qur'an was revealed as an oral transmission and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would merely recite the revelation as soon as he had received it without editing or revising. Allah says in verse 3 of Surah al-Muddaththir (The One Enveloped, 74):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ۝ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ۝ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ۝

Translated into English this verse means;

"And magnify your Lord (Allah)!"

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

Wa rabbaka fakabbir

The example above of an Arabic palindrome is all the more remarkable because it maintains the Qur'an's consistent unique style, and retains a coherent meaning which is often lost in normal Arabic poetry. When we take a closer look, we see the verse is composed of a palindrome. The word *rabbaka* (Lord) written backwards forms *kabbara* meaning 'magnify'.

xvii. Parenthesis

This is an explanatory or qualifying word, clause or sentence inserted into a passage with which it doesn't necessarily have any grammatical connection. For example:

"But those who believed, and worked righteousness – We tax not any person beyond his scope – such are the dwellers of Paradise. They will abide therein forever."

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 42.

xviii. Polyptoton

This stylistic scheme occurs when words are derived from the same root and repeated (e.g. 'strong' and 'strength'). In the Qur'an for example Allah says *sabab-nal maa a' sab-baa* and *shaqaqq-nal arda shaqqaa*:

أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ۝ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ۝

"We pour forth water in abundance. And We split the earth in clefts."

Surah 'Abasa (He Frowned) 80: 25-26.

xix. Rhetorical questions

This type of question is a figure of speech in the form of a question posed for its persuasive effect without the expectation of a reply (for example, *Why me?*). Rhetorical questions encourage the listener to think about what the (often obvious) answer to the question must be. When a speaker states, "How much longer must our people endure this injustice?", no formal answer is expected. Rather, it is a device used by the speaker to assert or deny something. In the Qur'an, Allah uses rhetorical questions in many places, for example:

"Is there any reward for good other than good?"

Surah ar-Rahmaan (The Most Gracious) 55: 60.

"Then he turned to their alihah (gods) and said: "Will you not eat (of the offering before you)?"

Surah as-Saaffaat (Those Ranged in Ranks) 37: 91.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَجَ النُّجُومَ
لَيَالٍ مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا
حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِّنَ الْبَيْتِ الْأَمْرِ
الْكَامِلِ الْعَبَّاسِ وَالْبَيْتِ الْأَمْرِ
الْكَامِلِ وَالْبَيْتِ الْأَمْرِ
الْكَامِلِ وَالْبَيْتِ الْأَمْرِ

Late 16th to early 17th century
 Qur'an from Uzbekistan written in
 large *muhaqqaq* style script showing
 the start of Surah Maryam (Mary,
 19). The text is fully vocalised in
 black and some use of red ink. Surah
 headers are decorated in a local
 style using floral patterns, with each
 header drawn in a different design.

xx. Synecdoche

This is closely related to metonymy and is a figure of speech that denotes a part of something but is used to refer to the whole thing. For example 'a pair of hands' referring to a worker. In the following Qur'anic verse there are many different aspects to consider. Firstly, a synecdoche when the word *raqaba* meaning 'neck' is used to refer to the whole ie. a slave. Then the charitable act itself being likened to a steep path, in other words a difficult course of action.

The psycholinguistics behind the verse alone opens up for consideration various aspects of human psychology, behaviour and comprehension in relation to language. Lastly, the use of the word *raqaba* achieves the effect of maintaining the rhyme created by the previous key word, *'aqaba* (the steep path).



"And what will make you know the path that is steep?
 (It is) freeing a neck."

Surah al-Balad (The City) 90: 12-13.

3. Qur'an bound stylistic variations

Stylistic variation is the use of different features of language in a myriad of ways. Continuing with the comparison between the unique literary form of the Qur'an and Arabic rhymed prose or *saj'*, we find that the Qur'an uses literary and linguistic devices in such a way that has not been used before with unparalleled communicative effect.

The use of stylistic variation or stylistic differences, includes, but is not limited to:

1. Semantically driven assonance and rhyme
2. Grammatical shifts (*iltifaat*, in Arabic)
3. Interrelation between sound, structure and meaning
4. Choice of words
5. Unique linguistic genre
6. Word order

To illustrate these points further take the following two Qur'anic verses which are structurally identical but stylistically distinct:

"These are the limits set by God, so do not approach them" ²⁵

"These are the limits set by God, so do not transgress them" ²⁶

The first verb 'approach' occurs in the context of following a very serious prohibition in the same verse:

"...but do not associate with your wives while you are in spiritual retreat in the mosques." ²⁷

The second verb 'transgress' of the second verse entails flexibility signified by the conjunctions in the previous phrases 'either' and 'or':

"A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness." ²⁸

In the context of stylistic variation the above example can provide empirical evidence for the view that the Qur'an uses words and phrases specifically to provide an accurate and intended meaning.

How are stylistic variations unique to the Qur'an?

The Qur'an achieves its unique literary form by transcending the use of language that is common to *saj'*. S. M. Hajjaji-Jarrah in her article "The Enchantment of Reading: Sound, Meaning, and Expression in Surat Al-Adiyat", which discusses how the Qur'an achieves its uniqueness due to stylistic differences, states: "... Qur'anic 'Arabiyya brings forth a dazzling assembly of word meaning and sound defying the conventions of both the Arabian *saj'* and the literary rules of classical Arabic literature". ²⁹

The following examples provide linguistic and literary evidence for the Qur'an's stylistic distinction.

سورة مريم على سبع وتسعون

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

كُلُّهُمْ عَصَى كُرْ حَمْدُ رَبِّكَ عَبْدُهُ زَكِيًّا ^{صد} اِذْ نَادَى نَحْنُ نَدَا خَفِيًّا قَالَ
رَبِّ اِنِّى وَهِنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّى وَاسْتَعَلَ الرَّاسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ اَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ
شَقِيًّا ^ل وَاِنِّى خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِىَ مِنْ وَرَائِى وَكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِى عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِّى مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
وَلِيًّا ^ل وَبَرِّتْ مِنْ اِلٰى يَغُفُّوبَ وَاَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ^ل يَا زَكِيًّا اِنَّا نَبْشُرُكَ
بِغُلَامٍ اِسْمُهُ نَحْيٰى لَمْ نَجْعَلْهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ^ل قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّى يَكُونُ لِّى غُلَامٌ
وَكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِى عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ^ل قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ
عَلَىٰ مَهَيِّئٍ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ^ط قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّى آيَةً قَالَ

وَنَسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَدْنَيْهِمْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ جَلَالِ يَوْمِئِذٍ
 ذَلِكَ الَّذِي أَنْتَ تَعْرِفُ فَلَا يُؤْذَنُ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا لِيَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الْمَنَافِقُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي
 الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجَهُمْ مِنْهَا أَوْ يُرْسِلَ فِيهَا
 الْأَقْبِلَاءَ مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْمَنُوا بِمَا حَزَنُوا فَنَصَّبُوا
 لِيَوْمِهِمْ يَوْمَهُمُ الْمُنْتَقِبُ فِي الْيَوْمِ يَمُوتُ الْكَافِرُ
 وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبِيلًا يَسْأَلُ النَّاسُ
 عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا
 يُزِيرُكَ إِلَى السَّاعَةِ تَكُونُ قِيَامًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعْلَمُ سَعِيرًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا



Two rare Qur'an leaves from Sultanate India, 15th century. These rare leaves are written in an unknown script that was possibly the precursor to *bihari*. The writing style has clear influence from the Middle East and China, and has similar characteristics to *bihari*, *muhaqqaq* and *naskh*. Traditional *bihari* script shares some similarities with *sini-muhaqqaq* scripts of China that were used to transcribe Qur'ans in Muslim parts of China from the late 15th century onwards, and the *proto-bihari* script shown above may well be a transitional script. The letters *noon* and *yaa*, for instance have the flat characteristics of *muhaqqaq*, and the short strokes of the letters *meem*, *waw* and *kaaf* appear to be the prototype for the later development of *bihari* script. The pages are from different parts of the Qur'an. The right hand page starts with Surah Saba (Sheba, 34) and starts from the fifth word from the beginning of verse 14 '*maa dallahum*'. It ends with the seventh word from the beginning of verse 18 (*baaraknaa feehaa*). The left hand page has verses from Surah al-Ahzaab (The Confederates, 33) starting on the sixth word (*wa nisaa-il mu'mineena*) from the beginning of verse 59 and ending with the first word (*khaalideena*) of verse 65.

مَا لَهُمْ عَلَى مَوْتِهِ^١ الْآكَابَةُ^٢ ۖ تَأْكُلُ
 مَنَاسِكَهُ^٣ ۖ فَلَمَّا خَذَ تَيْمَنَتَهُ^٤ الْجِنُّ^٥ أَنَوكَا^٦ تَوًّا
 يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ بِ
 الْمَهِينِ ۖ لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَآءٍ^٧ فِي مَسْأَلِكِهِمْ آيَةٌ^٨
 جَهَنَّمَ^٩ عَنْ تَمِيمٍ^{١٠} وَشَمَالٍ^{١١} كُؤَا^{١٢} مِزْزَقٍ^{١٣}
 رَبِّكُمْ^{١٤} وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ^{١٥} بِلَادَةَ^{١٦} طَيْبَةٍ^{١٧} وَرَبِّ غَفُورٍ^{١٨}
 فَاعْرَضُوا^{١٩} فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ^{٢٠} سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ^{٢١} وَبَلَّغْنَا^{٢٢}
 جَهَنَّمَ^{٢٣} جَهَنَّمَ^{٢٤} زَوَاتِي^{٢٥} أَكِلٍ^{٢٦} خَمَطٍ^{٢٧}
 وَائِلٍ^{٢٨} وَشَيْءٍ^{٢٩} مِّنْ سِدِّ^{٣٠} قَلِيلٍ^{٣١} ذَٰلِكَ^{٣٢} جَزَاؤُهُمْ
 مَا كَفَرُوا^{٣٣} وَهَلْ^{٣٤} جُنَّازِي^{٣٥} إِلَّا الْكَفُورُ^{٣٦} جَعَلْنَا
 بَيْنَهُمْ^{٣٧} وَبَيْنَ لَقَرِي^{٣٨} آتِي^{٣٩} بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا^{٤٠}

مَنَاسِكُهُ
 مَنَاسِكُهُ
 ح

سَآءٍ
 ح
 مَسْأَلِكِهِمْ
 ح

ح

اِرْحَاصُ
 ح

مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ **ط** وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا
لِلنَّاسِ **ج** وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا
الْعَالَمُونَ **ج** خَلَقَ اللَّهُ **ج** السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ **ط** إِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ **ج**
أَنفَلَمَا أَفْجَى إِلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ وَأَمْرِ الصَّلَاةِ **ط**
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ **ط** وَلَذِكْرُ
اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ **ط** وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ
وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ



Example 1: Word order, sound and meaning

The following is an example of how the Qur'an combines words, sounds, meaning and order to achieve its communicative goal, the result of which is sublime rhetoric³⁰, unsurpassed eloquence and a unique literary form. Let us examine the text from verses 3 and 4 of Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan, 3):

“...And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel, Aforetime, as a guidance to mankind. And He sent down the Criterion...”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 ۝۱ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۝۲ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
 بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۝۳ مِن قَبْلُ
 هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ۝۴ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 شَدِيدٌ ۝۵ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو نَقَمٍ ۝۶ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ

Working with the English transliteration the verse reads;

“wa-anzala at-tawrata waal-injeela min qablu hudan lilnnasi wa-anzala al-furqana”

An alternative order of the words is possible:

wa-anzala at-tawrata waal-injeela waal-furqana
 min qablu hudan lilnnas

However, when compared to the original this alternative arrangement has some flaws. Firstly, the alternative arrangement lacks rhythm, compared to the original Qur'anic structure, and it is phonetically inferior. Secondly, this arrangement has led to a disturbance in the meaning. This is due to the fact that the second use of the key word *anzala* (revealed) has been taken out and the final word *al-furqana* (the Criterion), whose position has a crucial semantic value, has been placed in the middle of the sentence.

In the original Qur'anic sentence, the repetition of the word *anzala* and the placement of *al-furqana* are essential devices employed to enhance the communicative, psycholinguistic and rhetorical effect. The repetition of the word *anzala* is to confirm the revelation of the Criterion and that it is indeed a Divine scripture while the placement of the word *al-furqana* at the end of the sentence is to confirm that the Criterion is the last and final scripture.³¹ Abd al-Qadir Ahmad 'Ata refers to examples like these as 'the chemical composition of the Qur'an' which indicate the delicate and balanced stylistic variation in the Qur'an.³²

Example 2: Grammatical Shift (*iltifaat*)

Professor Abdel Haleem in his article 'Grammatical Shift for Rhetorical Purposes: *Iltifaat* and related features in the Qur'an',³³ highlighted another inimitable feature of the Qur'an, the extensive use of grammatical shifts. This feature is an effective rhetorical device that enhances the texts literary expression and achieves the communicative goal;³⁴ it is an accepted, well researched part of Arabic rhetoric. One can find references in the books of *balagha* (Arabic Rhetoric) by al-Athir, Suyuti and Zarkashi.³⁵

These grammatical shifts include changes in person, change in number, change in addressee, change in tense, change in case marker, using a noun in place of a pronoun and many other changes.³⁶ An example of this complex rhetorical feature is exhibited in the following verse. It changes to talking about Allah, in the third person, to Allah Himself speaking in the first person plural of majesty:

“There is no good in most of their secret talk, only in commanding charity, or good, or reconciliation between people. To anyone who does these things, seeking to please God, We shall give a rich reward.”

Surah an-Nisaa (The Women, 4): 114.

Opposite

Thirteen lines of a *bihari* script in black and gold, 16th century. The page is ruled in red and black ink. Individual verses are marked in the text with small gold rosettes pointed in blue. The word 'Allah' is written in gold throughout. A large blue and gold teardrop device in the margin indicates the end of section. The folium shows part of verse 42 through to part of verse 46 from Surah al-Ankaboot (The Spider, 29).

Right

A Qur'an section from the Persian region, 16th/17th century. The first sixteen verses of Surah Maryam (Mary, 19) are shown written using two different sizes of hybrid *muhaqqaq-naskh* script enclosed within a simple line border. The manuscript has had some patches of repair work carried out at a more recent date.



Opposite page

Enlarged image of a small Qur'an volume containing a number of different surahs, most likely used during travel, Indian subcontinent, 19th century. There are nine lines of *naskh* script per page with simple circles marking the end of each verse. The main text compartment is set within a multi-coloured framed panel. The right hand page shows part of verse 86 through to the end of Surah al-Waaqi'ah (The Event, 56). Surah Mulk (The Dominion, 67) starts at the bottom of the left hand page.

Surah al-Kawthar provides another good example of the use of grammatical shift.

“Verily, We have granted you al-Kawthar. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice. For he who hates you, he will be cut off.”

Surah al-Kawthar (A River in Paradise) 108: 1-3.

In this surah, there is a change from the first person plural ‘We’ in the first line to the second person ‘...**your Lord**’. This change is not an abrupt shift; it is calculated and highlights the intimate relationship between Allah and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The use of ‘We’ as described above is used to emphasize the Majesty, Power and the Ability of Allah, whereas ‘Your Lord’ is used to indicate and emphasise intimacy, closeness and love; this is an apt use as the preceding concepts are about prayer, sacrifice and worship ‘**So to your Lord pray and sacrifice**’. Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is also to console Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; using intimate language enhances the psycholinguistic effect. A final shift occurs from the second person to the third person singular.

These shifts contribute to the dynamic style of the Qur'an and are obvious stylistic features and accepted rhetorical practice. The Qur'an uses this feature in such a way that conforms to the theme of the text (semantically driven) while enhancing the impact of the message it conveys. It is not surprising that Neal Robinson in his book ‘Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text’ concludes that the grammatical shifts used in the Qur'an, “... are a very effective rhetorical device.”³⁷

The Qur'an is the only form of Arabic prose to have used this rhetorical device in an extensive and complex manner. Professor Abdel Haleem states, “... it employs this feature far more extensively and in more variations than does Arabic poetry. It is, therefore, natural to find... no one seems to quote references in prose other than from the Qur'an.”³⁸

Hence, the Qur'an is stylistically distinct from any known form of Arabic speech. It uses linguistic and literary devices in such a way that have not been used before.

كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينَةٍ
تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِلَى كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ فَأَمَّا إِنْ
كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ
فَرُوحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ
جَنَّتْ نَفِيمٌ وَأَمَّا
إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ
الْيَمِينِ فَسَلَامٌ لَكَ
مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ
فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ
تَصْلِيَةٌ بِجَهَنَّمَ أِنَّ
هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِكَ
الْعَظِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ

ع

تَلَّ مِنْهَا وَكَرَّ تَصِيدًا مَفْرُوضًا وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ
 أُولُو الْقَرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَارْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ
 وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا وَلْيَحْضِرِ الَّذِينَ ارْتَكَبُوا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
 ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ ضِعْفًا فَإِذَا خُفُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا
 قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا
 إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا
 يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلَّذِي يُلِدُكَ إِسْمًا خَيْرًا لِّلْأُنثَى
 فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ
 وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا الشُّدُّ
 مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
 وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ
 فَلِأَبِيهِ الشُّدُّ مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَصِيَّةٌ يُّوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دِينَارٌ
 وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا
 فَرَضِيَّةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا وَلَكُمْ



صُغَرَ مَا تَرَكَ إِنْ وَارَثَكُمْ بَنٌ لَّهُ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ
 لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ كَمَا لَرِجَالٍ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ بَنٌ لَّهُنَّ وَصِيَّةٌ
 يُّوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دِينَارٌ وَلَهُنَّ الرِّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ بَنٌ لَّهُنَّ
 يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ النِّصْفُ مِمَّا
 تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّتِكُمْ يَوْصِي بِهَا أَوْ دِينَارٌ
 كَانَ نَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوِ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ
 فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا الشُّدُّ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ
 ذَلِكَ فَهُمُ شَرَكَاؤُا لِّلثَلَاثِ مِنَ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّتِهِ يَوْصِي بِهَا
 أَوْ دِينَارٌ غَيْرُ مَضَافٍ وَصِيَّةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ
 ذَلِكَ حَدُّوهُ مِنَ طَبَعِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ يُدْخِلُهُ
 جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ
 الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ
 يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ وَالَّذِينَ يَأْتُوا
 الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ بَيْنَاكُمْ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ الْفَاحِشَةِ

17th century Qur'an page and its reverse side from Iraq or Persia. There are fourteen lines of text per page written in a very neat black *naskh* script on thick paper. Round gold coloured circles act as verse markers and some of the vowel markings have been penned in red ink. The pages are decorated with a golden trellis of floral designs in the margins. The page on the right starts partway through verse 7 of Surah an-Nisaa (The Women, 4) ending on the left hand page on part of verse 15. The single blue and gold roundel in the margin indicates the end of the surah's first section.

Example 3: Qur’anic precision

A further example of Qur’anic precision is found in a verse that mentions two of the attributes of Allah; *al-Ghafoor* (The Forgiving) and *ar-Raheem* (The Merciful). In the Qur’an we find that these two names of Allah are mentioned together more than seventy times, with the word *al-Ghafoor* always preceding *ar-Raheem*. However, in Surah Saba verse 2 (see below), we find that *ar-Raheem* is mentioned before *al-Ghafoor*. So the question arises as to why this might be.

“In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise and thanks are to Allah, to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. His is all praise and thanks in the Hereafter, and He is the All-Wise, the Well-Acquainted (with all things). He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes forth from it, and that which descends from the heaven and that which ascends to it. And He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving.”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ۝ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجِ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ
مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ ۝

Surah Saba (Sheba) 34: 1-2.

If we examine the content and structure of the whole verse in detail we see that the two attributes of Allah ‘Mercy and Forgiveness’ alternate as shown in the representation below. Allah begins verse two with the word “He knows” which has a direct connection with why *ar-Raheem* is mentioned first in this case.

If we carefully analyse this verse Allah says that “**He knows that which goes into the earth...**” If we consider the types of things that go into the earth such as seeds that are buried in the ground, worms, insects, drops of rain and the fact that human beings will also go into the earth when they die. Once in the ground we will need to rely on the Mercy of Allah. Then Allah says, “**and that which comes forth from it**”. Vegetation, springs and rivers gushing forth are examples of all the types of things that come out of the earth. Similarly human beings will too come out from the earth when they are resurrected from their graves. At that time we will need to rely on Allah’s attribute of *al-Ghafoor* (forgiveness).

The verse continues and Allah says “**and that which descends from the heaven**”. Consider for a moment what comes from the skies such as drops of rain, Divine commandments in the form of revelations, Allah’s graces, favours and provisions. We see that all of these things are a mercy from Allah. Rain is a mercy, revelation is a mercy and provisions are a mercy. The verse then ends with “**and that which ascends to it. And He is the Most Merciful, the Oft-Forgiving**”. Our deeds, supplications, and souls depart this world and all ascend to heaven and what is required in these instances from Allah is his forgiveness. Thus, each part of the verse connects with these two names and the verse has to end on *ar-raheemul ghafoor* in contrast to all other occurrences, in order to maintain the correct sequence.

This verse provides another excellent example of the precision and balance present throughout the Qur’an, coupled with a level of awareness of what is being said and the implications behind the words that would have been impossible for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to produce by himself and remain consistent over a period of twenty three years.

Mercy Mercy Mercy

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجِ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ ۝

Forgiveness Forgiveness Forgiveness

Following pages
Exquisite bifolium from
a Qur’an dated 1743 CE,
Persia. The Qur’anic text
is written in *naskh* with
interlinear Persian translation
in red *nasta’liq* and additional
commentary in the margins.
The body text is set within
ruled lines enclosed by a
rectangular gold and red
frame. The surah title is
written in red within a gilded
header panel. The page shows
the start of Surah at-Talaq
(The Divorce, 65).

Opposite

Intricate opening page from a 16th century Persian Qur'an written in a fine *rayhani* script with the first part of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1). The text is enclosed with a circular panel with a strapwork frame surrounded by a red, gold and green lined panel filled with coloured flowers on blue ground.

Example 4: Maintenance of rhythm

An example of textual precision and maintenance of rhythm in the Qur'an is found within the story of Prophet Moses (*Musa*, peace be upon him). Prophet Moses is mentioned together with his brother Prophet Aaron (*Harun*, peace be upon him) in numerous places in the Qur'an. So for example in Surah A'raaf (The Heights), verses 121 and 122 we read:

"They said: "We believe in the Lord of the *Alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists). The Lord of Moses and Aaron."

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ إِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ۚ فَوَقَعَ
الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۚ فَغُلِبُوا هُنَا لَكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَغِيرِينَ ۚ
وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَجْدِينَ ۚ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ رَبِّ مُوسَى
وَهَارُونَ ۚ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَامَنُتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ
مِّمَّكُمْ فُي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّ عَنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ لَا قُطْعَانَ

Note how all of the verses leading up to the mention of the Prophets Moses and Aaron end with the letter *noon*. Usually when we read the story about their meeting with the Pharaoh and his magicians as in the above verse, Prophet Moses is always mentioned before Prophet Aaron. However, there is one exception. In Surah TaaHaa (20) verse 70 Allah says:

"So, the magicians fell down prostrate. They said: "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."

يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ تَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَى ۚ قَالُوا بَلْ أَتَقُولُ فَإِذَا
جِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهُ تَسْعَى ۚ فَأَوْجَسَ
فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَىٰ ۚ قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۚ وَأَلْقِ
مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا ۚ إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سَاجِدٌ وَلَا يَفْعَلُ السَّاحِرُ
حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ ۚ قَالُوا السَّحَرَةُ سُحَدَاءُ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ ۚ

The order of the names is different in this verse so that the rhythm of the recitation is maintained. The previous Qur'anic text shows that the verses preceding verse 70 all end on the letter *alif*. Hence, ending verse 70 with the name *Musa*, helps to maintain this style and rhythm.

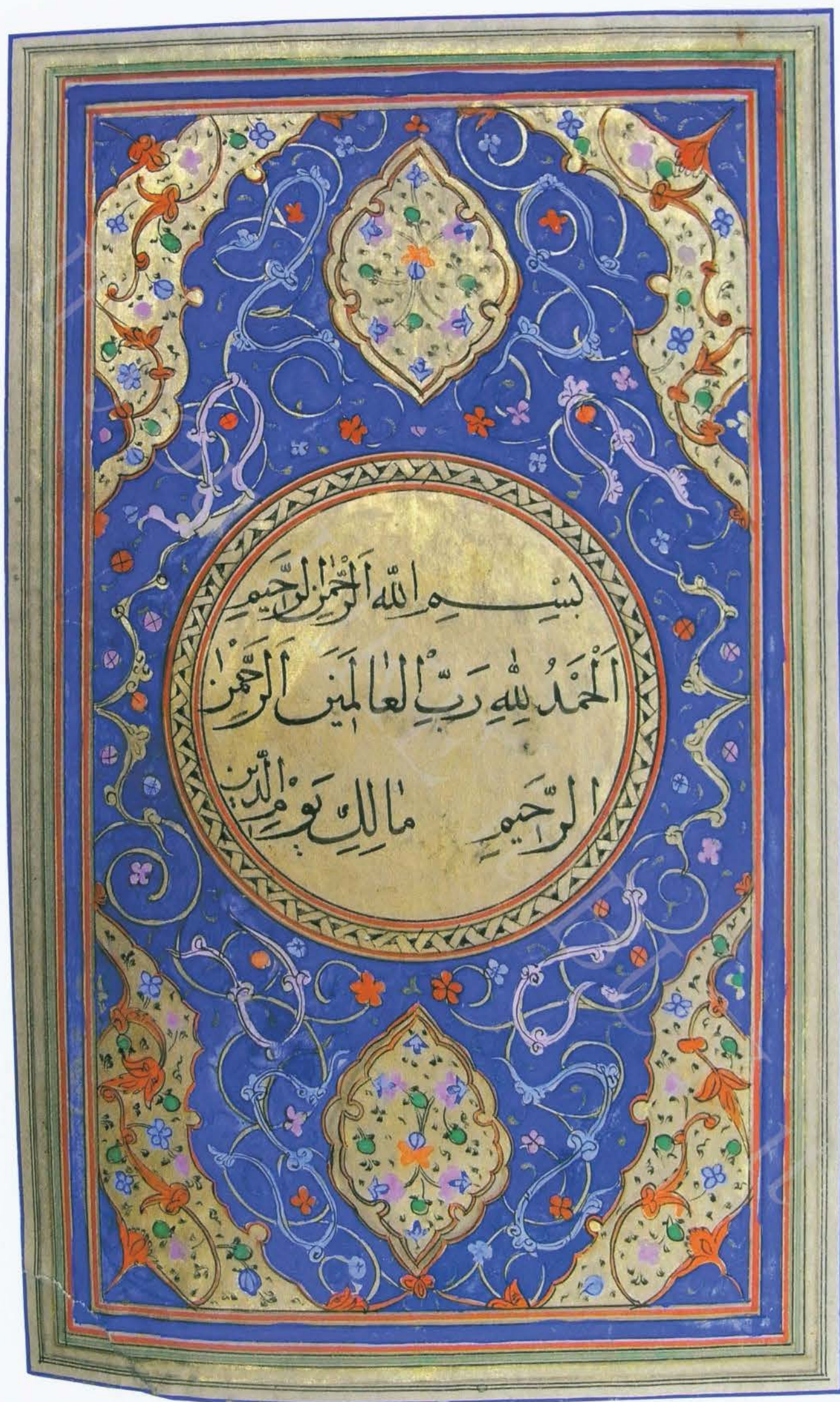
Example 5: Singular and plural words

One of the many fascinating aspects of the Qur'an is that it never ceases to astound those who study it. As each layer of knowledge is unravelled further levels of understanding and comprehension are revealed. The fact that Allah the Creator has a very fine and subtle knowledge of human nature in terms of how we think and feel is highlighted throughout the Qur'an. For example, whenever Allah uses the word *sama'* (listen) in the Qur'an it is usually in its singular rather than the plural form as in Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) verse 7 we read;

"Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, (i.e. they are closed from accepting Allah's Guidance), and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment."

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ
أَبْصَارِهِمْ غَشَاةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۖ

The highlighted text above shows that although the words *quloobihim* (hearts) and *absaarihim* (eyes) are in their plural forms the word *sami'him* (hearing) is singular. This is due to the fact that if we listen to speech, our hearts and minds all react on an individual basis, whereby we will translate and understand the speech according to our own personal understanding and comprehension of what was said. This type of subtlety is lost when the Qur'an is translated into another language, so the true linguistic miracle and magnificence of the Qur'an can only be fully appreciated from the original Arabic.



Opposite top

Very simple 16th century Qur'an from India written in *naskh*. The beginning of Surah al-Ahzaab (The Confederates, 33) is shown on the right hand page. There are ten lines of text per page set within a red and black ruled frame. Verse endings are indicated by simple circles above the line.

Opposite bottom

The last part of Surah al-Mu'minoon (The Believers, 23) and the start of Surah an-Noor (The Light, 24) from a complete Qur'an dated to the mid-16th century CE, written using the special script of Bihar in India (*khat-i-Bihar*). Qur'anic manuscripts written with this script are very rare and there are only a few remaining in the world as the Bihari dynasty only lasted for around 100 years. The dark coloured paper is quite fragile and is hand made from jute. There are some bore holes around the edges of the right hand page and in the centre where an insect has eaten away some of the paper.

Example 5 (continued): Singular and plural words

Another example of the use of singular and plural words occurs in Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets, 26). The following verses reveal how the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them) and the people of Ad, Thamud and al-Aikah all denied the Messengers of Allah.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

“The people of Noah denied the Messengers.”

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 105.

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾

“(The people of) Ad denied the Messengers”

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 123.

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

“(The people of) Thamud denied the Messengers.”

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 141.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

“The people of Lot denied the Messengers.”

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 160.

كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

“The dwellers of Al-Aikah denied the Messengers.”

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 176.

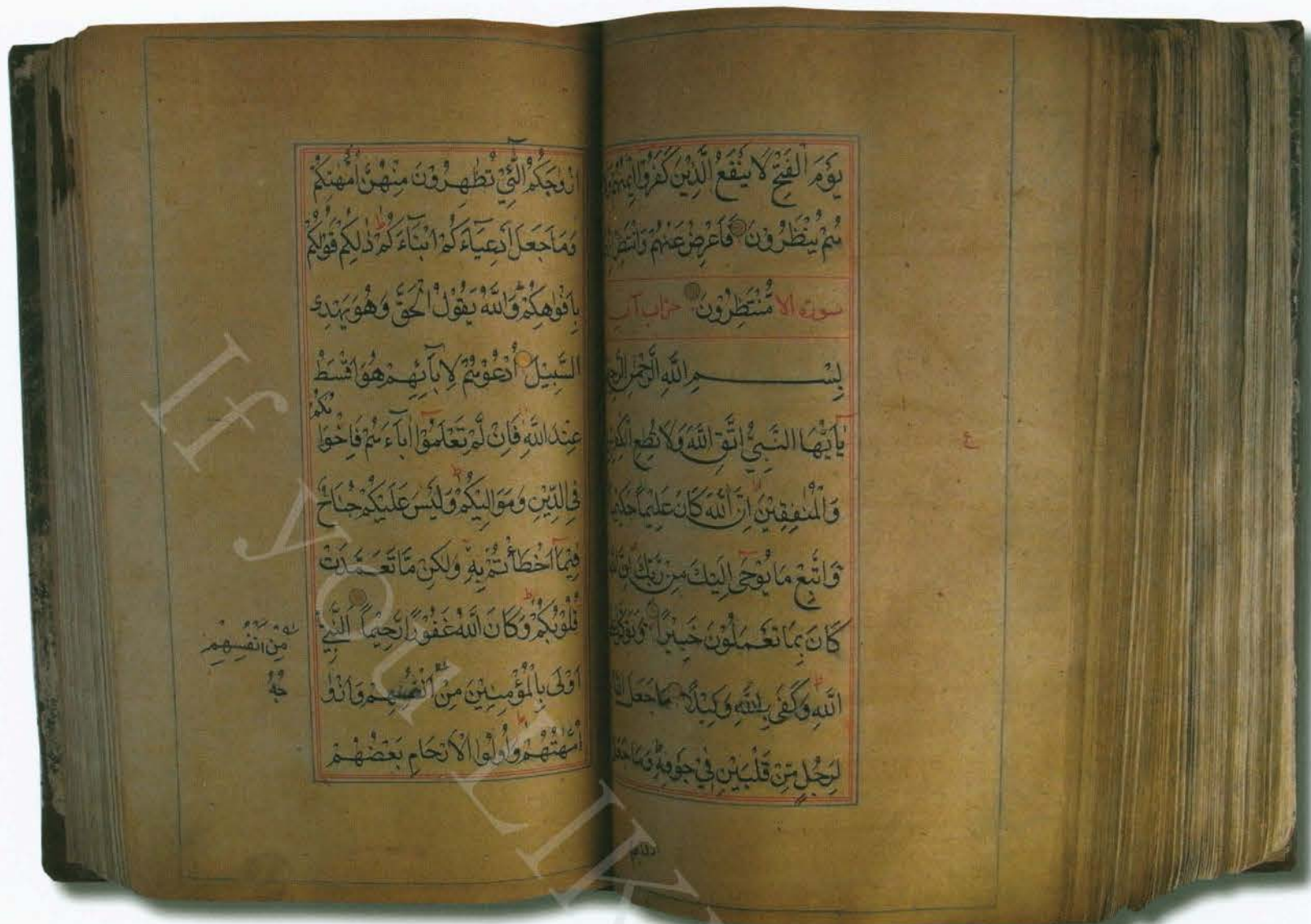
In all of these verses the apparent meaning is clear that all of these people denied their Messengers. However the choice of the plural word *al-mursaleen* (Messengers) rather than singular *ar-rasool* is more appropriate here. This is due to the fact that even if you deny one of Allah's Messengers it is as if you have denied them all because they all came with the same message, namely, Islam. As in the following verse where Allah says;

“Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His messengers) saying, “We believe in some but reject others,” and wish to adopt a way in between.

They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment.

And those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them (messengers), We shall give them their rewards; and Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

Surah an-Nisaa (The Women) 4: 150-152.



16th century page from a Persian Qur'an written in *naskh* alternating with neatly framed Persian translation in red *nasta'liq*. Surah headings are in red with additional commentary written in black and red in the margin. The page contains Surah al-Insaan (Man, 76), part of verse 11 to part of 21.

Example 6: Qur'anic imagery and word choice

There are many examples in the Qur'an of a particular word being used rather than another word with a similar meaning that phonetically enhances the description in the text during its recitation. For instance, Allah says in Surah al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage, 22) verse 31:

“Hunafa’ Lillah (i.e. worshipping none but Allah), not associating partners (in worship) to Him; and whoever assigns partners to Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.”

وَأَجْنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ ۚ خُفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَخُطِفَهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ نَهَوَىٰ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعِظْمُ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَىٰ الْقُلُوبِ ۚ لَكُمْ

Here (*hunafa’ lillah*) means, sincerely submitting to Him alone, shunning falsehood and seeking the truth. Allah then says **“not associating partners unto Him”**. Then Allah gives a likeness of the idolator in his misguidance and being doomed and being far away from true guidance, and says: **whoever assigns partners to Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.”**

This whole passage conjures up a vivid scene of a person falling down from the sky from a great height about to be violently broken into pieces or he may be swept away by the wind or thrown into a bottomless depth. What is striking is the rapid and violent movement, with scenes happening in quick succession and then disappearing completely.

The interesting point to note here is that the verse ends with the word *saheeq*, rather than an alternative word, *baeed*. Both of these have a very similar meaning: remote, distant and faraway. However, the word *saheeq* is used because it ends in the letter *qaf*, which is a ‘heavy’ letter in the Arabic alphabet as opposed to the ‘lighter’ *daal* at the end of the word *baeed*. In this case the verse ends on a much harder note, which strengthens and underlines the stark events being portrayed in the verse.

The verse represents a very accurate picture and apt description of one who associates partners with Allah. He falls from the sublime height of faith to land in utter destruction. Finishing the verse with the letter *qaf* shows the severity of the matter, and that when the person is thrown to the faraway place the landing is not soft, rather he is smashed on the ground with a crack. This type of example highlights further the unique inter-relationship between the precise choice of Qur'anic words, their resonance and how this effects the meaning of a particular verse.



Close-up view of the word
Allah from an 18th century
Persian Qur'an written
in *naskh* with interlinear
translation in *nasta'liq*.

Example 7: The challenge

Surah al-Kawthar is the shortest surah in the Qur'an with only three short verses and like all of the other chapters in the Qur'an, has an unmatched selection of words, pronouns, word order and meaning. Moreover, anyone attempting to take up the challenge of the Qur'an only needs to produce something comparable to it. By briefly analysing this chapter's first verse it provides an insight into how this matchless and eloquent discourse is achieved.

i. Emphasis and choice of pronoun

Verily, We have granted you al-Kawthar.

Inna a'tayna kal kawthar

Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.

Fasalli li rabbika wanhar

For he who hates you, he will be cut off.

Inna shani-aka huwal abtar

The use of the words (**Verily, We**) at the start of *al-Kawthar* is emphatic; also the plural is used to indicate power, certainty, ability, greater quantity or sometimes to stress the status and greatness (*li-ta'zim al-mutakallim aw ihtimaman bidhikr rabbika wa ta'ziman*). This is an apt choice of pronoun as its persuasive force can not be matched by any other pronoun. The effect is "The Creator, who has power to do anything, has indeed given you ..."

ii. Word choice

The term *a'tayn* has been used instead of *aataaina* because of a subtle difference. The difference as defined by Ibn Manzoor in his *Lisan al-Arab* is that the Qur'anic choice indicates 'to hand over with one's own hand' whereas the non Qur'anic selection does not provide this meaning.

This choice of word is apt as it strengthens the sentence emphasizing the surety of giving, ability, greatness, power and intimacy (to console and strengthen Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). The verb has also been used in the past tense which indicates that it has already happened and makes it definitive. This further accentuates the meaning of surety, power and greatness. This also expresses certainty of a promise; in this case Prophet Muhammad ﷺ will have *al-Kawthar*, or abundance.

The root stem for the word *al-Kawthar* are the letters *kaf*, *tha* and *ra* (*kathara*). This signifies plentiful, multitude, overflowing, rich, unstinting and unending. Other derivations of this root include:

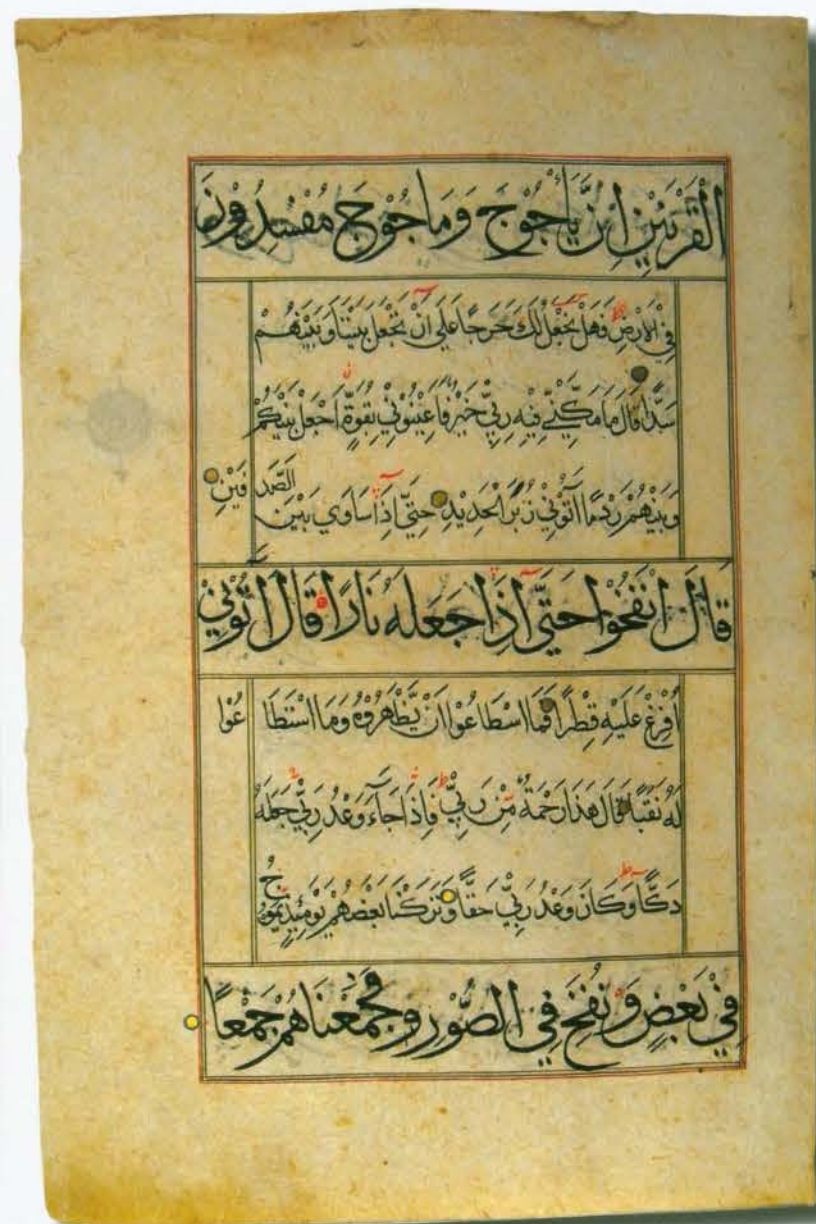
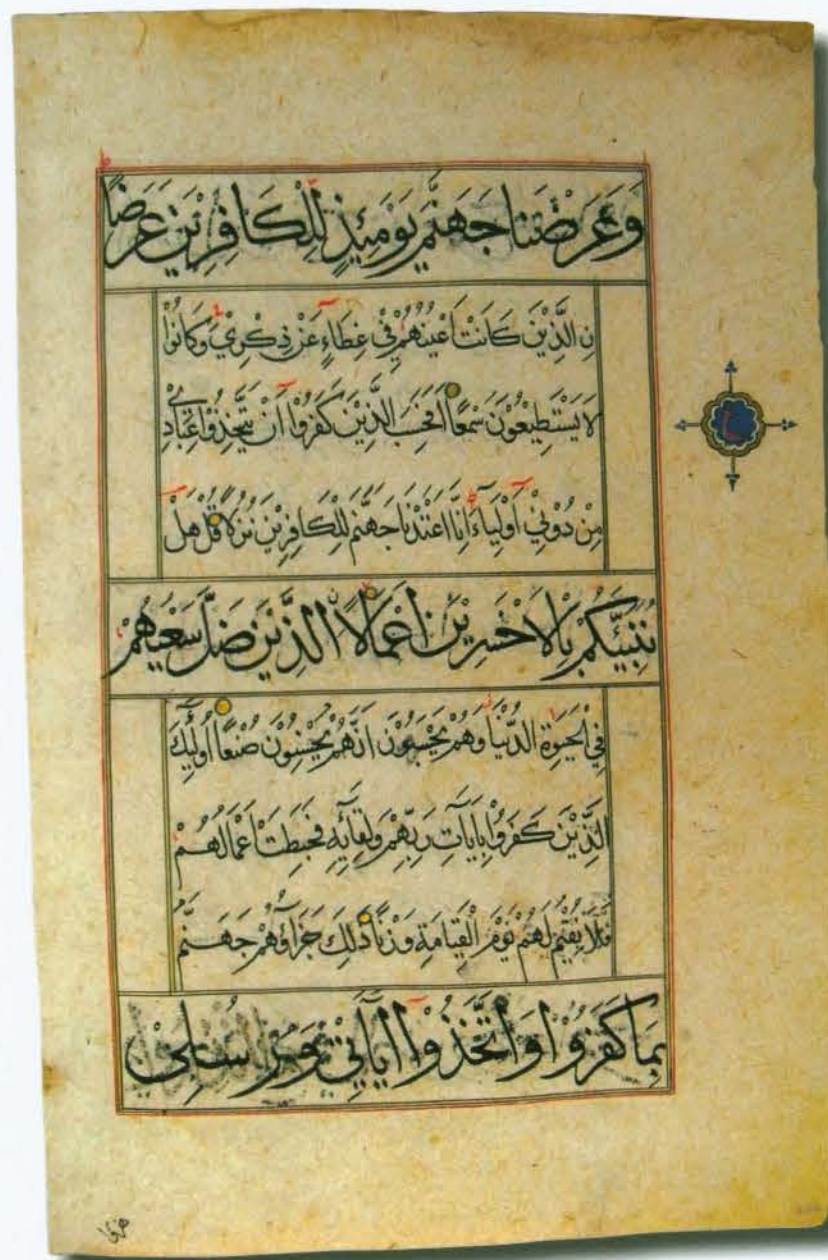
1. *katha-ratun*: Multitude
2. *katheerun*: Much, many, numerous
3. *ak'tharu*: More numerous (emphasis)
4. *kath-thara*: To multiply
5. *takathur*: Act of multiplying
6. *is-thak-thara*: To wish for much

Al-Qurtubi states that the Arabs used '*kawthar*' to denote anything which is great in quantity or value. This word can not be replaced with another, as its meaning can not be matched equally with any other Arabic word.

Following pages

Detail view of Surah al-Kawthar (A River in Paradise, 108) from a majestic 16th century Persian Qur'an written in a *rayhani* script on thin highly polished paper. The surah title is enclosed in a rectangular panel embellished in white within a gold foliate panel, stating the title and the number of verses.

Handwritten *naskh* manuscript leaves from a Sultanate Indian Qur'an dated 1616 CE. This fine quality leaf was scribed by Abdullah al-Khadim and shows Surah al-Kahf (The Cave, 18) from part of verse 94 (top right image) to verse 106 on the left image. The format is typical of Qur'anic manuscripts from a much earlier period. There are nine lines of Arabic script per page with the first, fifth and ninth lines written in a larger cursive hand.



iii. Word arrangement

The placement of *al-Kawthar* is an attribute; plentiful and abundance. However, this word has been placed at the end of the verse with no word after to be attributed to it, as al-Qurtubi points out, this indicates that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has been given an abundance of everything. Islamic scholars state that if Allah had bestowed one thing in great multitude then that would have been mentioned. However, due to giving Prophet Muhammad ﷺ an abundance of everything, nothing is mentioned to indicate everything or many things. Also, within the science of eloquence and rhetoric, mentioning all things would be superfluous and not a good use of language.

iv. Multiple meaning

The word *al-Kawthar* has been given multiple meanings by the scholars. These meanings include:

1. A river of Paradise from which rivers flow.

2. The fountain on the Day of Judgement from which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ will quench the thirst of his people.

3. His prophethood.

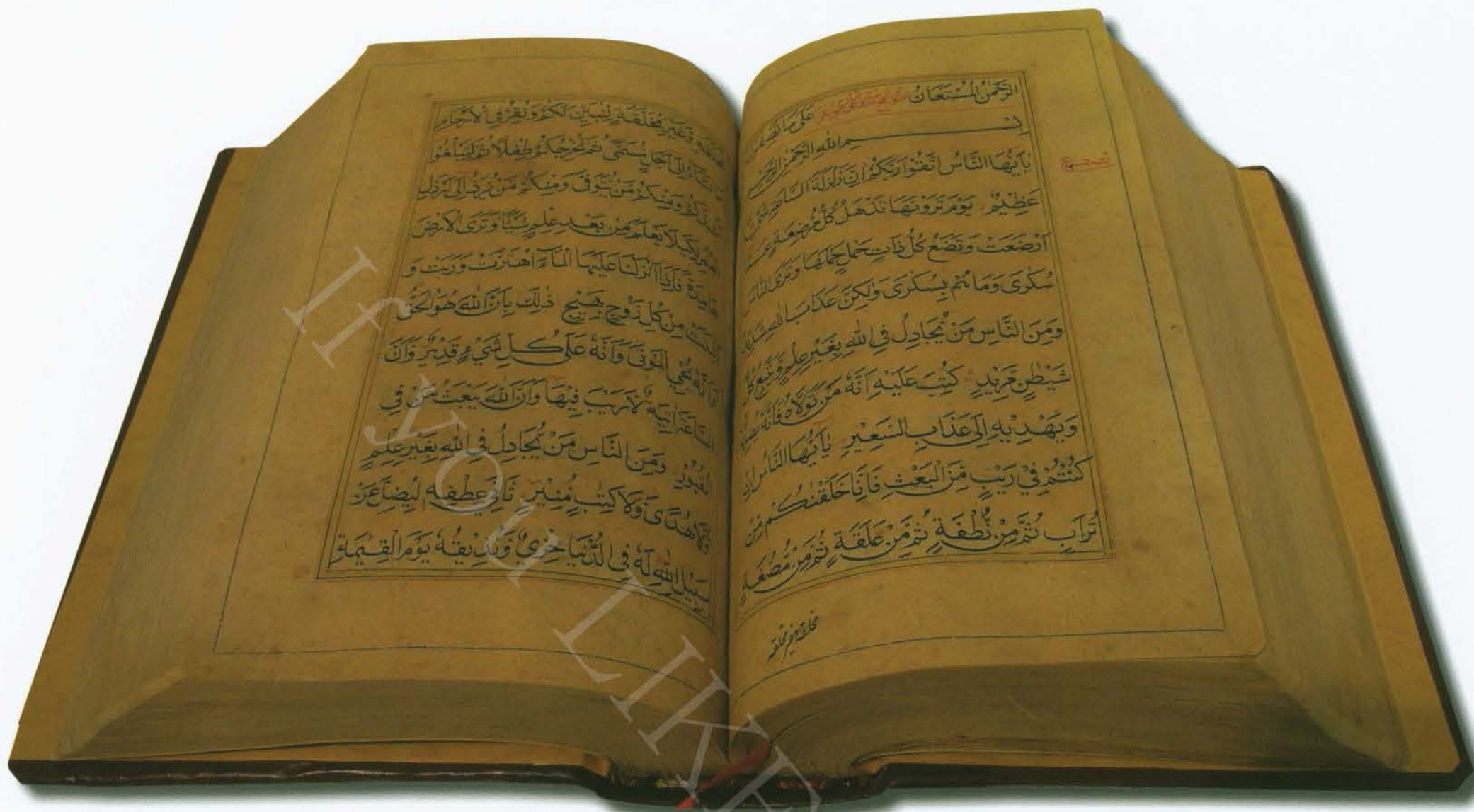
4. The Qur'an.

5. The way of life called Islam.

6. The multitude of his companions; no other prophet had as many companions as Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

7. Elevated status. No one is more researched, more mentioned, more praised and more loved than Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

8. It is a multitude of goodness.



Just by briefly looking at Surah al-Kawthar's first line it can be seen that the words, word order and pronoun have been carefully selected to enhance the meaning. Any attempt to change the words or word order will truly cease to sound like the Qur'an, and the powerful meaning would be lost. As we have discussed, the Qur'an is unique in that it does not follow the normal pattern of Arabic poetry and prose. The flow of the Qur'an is not interrupted by the repeated detail contained in many of its verses. In fact, part of the beauty of the Qur'an can be attributed to its precise detail and accuracy.

Hence, the overview presented here shows how the Qur'an transcends all forms of Arabic rhymed prose (*saj'*). In fact theologians and Arab linguists hold that the Qur'an does not contain just ordinary *saj'*, and is in fact unique to all types of *saj'*. Their reasoning is that in the Qur'an, the use of language is semantically orientated and its literary structure is distinct, whereas in *saj'*, conformity to style is a primary objective.

No human being has ever composed a book that discusses such diverse topics in a language with so much rhythm, beauty and style. Further examples of the Qur'an's unique literary form are too many and varied to list and are beyond the scope of this book, but can be found in a multitude of other works on this subject.

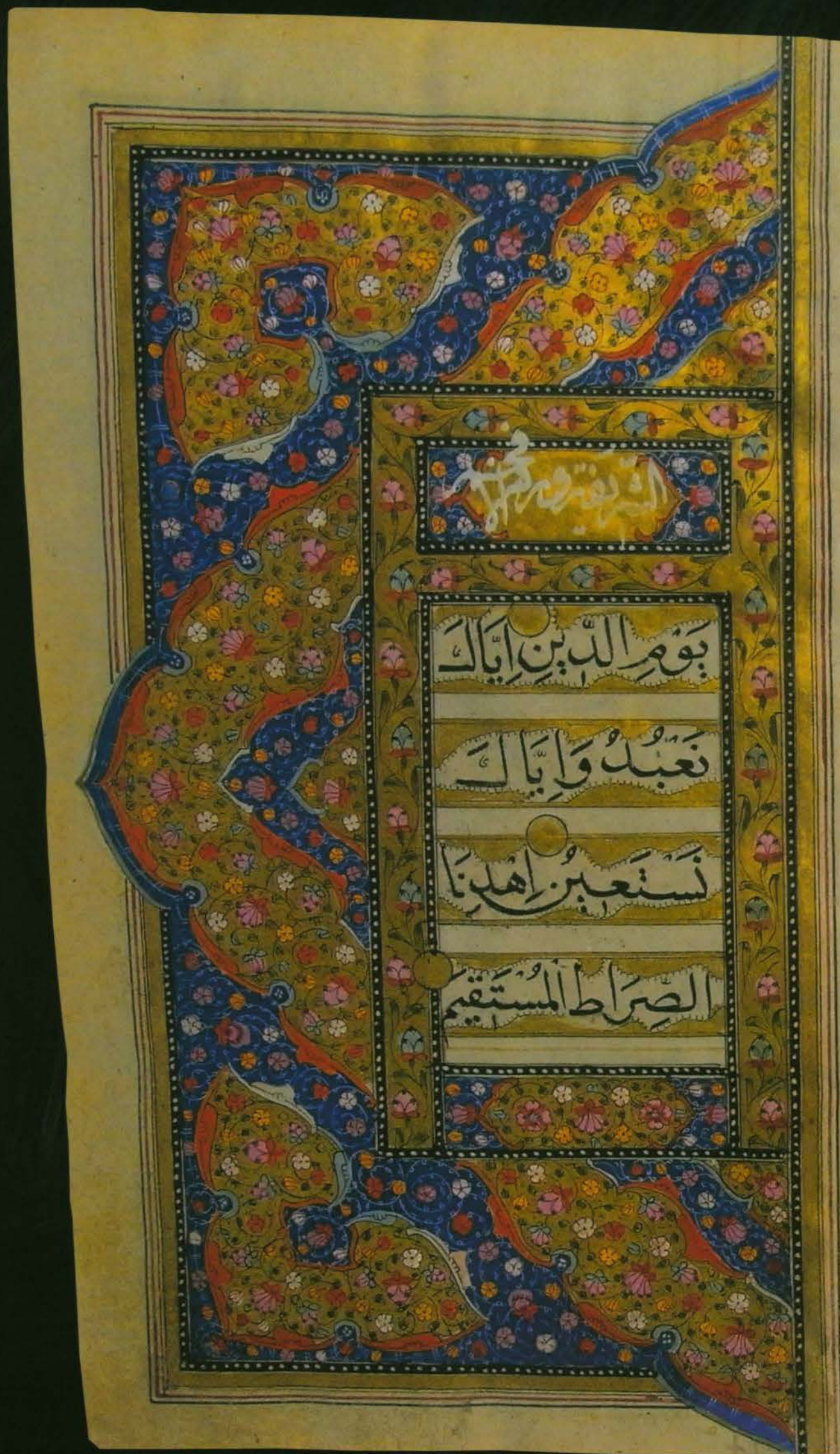
In conclusion, the Qur'an is a literary and linguistic miracle. It has challenged those who doubt its Divine authorship and history has shown that it is indeed a miracle as there can be no natural explanation to comprehensively explain its unmatched unique expression. As tangible signs, Qur'anic verses are expressive of an inexhaustible truth. They signify meanings layered within meanings, light upon light and miracle after miracle. Examples of other miraculous aspects of the Qur'an, such as the scientific accuracy where it deals with many natural phenomena, can be found in "The Islam Guide, pp. 191-264".³⁹

A complete handwritten Qur'an from 18th century Afghanistan. Written in variant *naskh* on brown paper using a non-toxic herbal ink. Certain letters such as *yaa* and *noon* have elongated extensions below the line. The beginning of Surah al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage, 22) to part of verse 9 is shown.

Beautifully illustrated 16th century Qur'an from Persia or Iraq written in elegant *rayhani* script on thin highly polished paper. Surah al-Balad (The City, 90) is written on the right hand page and Surah ash-Shams (The Sun, 91) on the left. The text on every page is enclosed within a blue, gold and orange frame. Surah headers are with floral designs using a variety of colours with the header text written in white. Verses are separated by coloured circles drawn above the line. Alternating blue and gold ornaments in the margin indicate the end of every 5th and 10th verse.



Visually intense opening pages from a 17th century Qur'an copied in the Indian subcontinent providing a striking example of symmetry, layout and design. There are four lines of text per page within a cloud type motif and very unusually it contains only the first 6 verses of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1). The manuscript is written in *naskh* style Arabic script. The border is heavily illustrated with a bed of floral design work using a multiple array of colours that is fully symmetrical on a central axis. The text is vocalised with simple red circles marking the end of a verse.





Following pages
Detailed view of the opening page from an elaborately decorated 19th century Qur'an with the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) written on polished paper. The text is typically set within a cloud-motif upon gold ground enclosed by a strapwork frame.

The design scheme of these centre pages from a magnificent Qur'an written in Afghanistan, dated 1269 AH (1891 CE) is similar to most Qur'ans from this region. The text is elegantly written in a traditional *naskh* script within a cloud motif surrounded by a repeating sea of coloured flowers. The name of the calligrapher is inscribed on the back page as Ghulam Mahuidin. The surah starting on the right hand page is Bani Israeel (The Children of Israel, 17). The writing in red ink in the far margin indicates that this Surah is in the 15th *juz'* of the Qur'an.

15th Juz'

بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ
 آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
 الْبَصِيرُ. وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى
 الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى
 لِّبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَتْلُوا
 مِنْ دُونِ وَكِيدًا ذُرِّيَّةُ
 مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ
 كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا. وَ
 قَضَيْنَا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ

وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا
يَمْكُرُونَ . إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا الَّذِينَ هُمْ
فَيَحْسِنُونَ .
سُوْرَةُ اِسْرَائِيْل وَمِائَةِ اَحَدِيْ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ
لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي

١٥
عَشْر
مِائَةِ
اَلْاَحَدِ
اَلْاَحَدِ

بَارِكْنَا

غَافِلِينَ • وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَاهُ
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَوْ أَنَّ عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَارِدُونَ • فَأَنْشَأْنَا
 لَكُمْ فِيهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَنْجِيلٌ وَاعْنَابٌ لَكُمْ فِيهَا
 فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ • وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ
 مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِلْآكِلِينَ •
 وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لَسُقِيَكُمْ مِنْهَا فِي بَطْنِ
 نَهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ •
 وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ • وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا
 إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
 إِلَهِ غَيْرِهِ • أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ • فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ
 يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً
 مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ • إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا
 رَجُلٌ بِدْعَةٌ فَتَرَى صَوَابَهُ حَتَّى جِئَ • قَالَ رَبِّ
 انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونَ • فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلَ

عشر

Two sides from a single Qur'an page written in the Caucasus, most likely Chechnya, 19th century. The text is written in a bold *naskh* style with some vowel markings in red ink. Individual verses are separated by red circles. The folio on the opposite page starts with Surah al-Mu'minoon (The Believers, 23) and continues over the page ending on part of verse 27. The large marginal ornament indicates the start of the eighteenth *juz'* of the Qur'an.



قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
 لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ
 إِلَّا عَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ
 مَلُومِينَ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَى وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
 الْوَارِثُونَ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
 وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ
 جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ
 عَلَاقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ
 عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ
 فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
 لَمَيِّتُونَ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ وَلَقَدْ
 خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَقَدْ سَبَّحَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنْ الْخَلْقِ

Following pages
 Surah al-Falaq (The
 Daybreak, 113) from a 17th
 century Qajar Qur'an written
 in Persia. Richly decorated
 throughout using precious
 gold and other colours and
 written in *naskh* script on
 handmade polished paper.

سورة الضحى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

لَيْسَ بِشَيْءٍ عَظِيمٍ
وَالصَّفَاتِ صَفًا ۝ قَالَ نَزَّحْتُ نَجْمًا

فَالْتَلَيْتُ ذِكْرًا ۝ إِنِّي أَهْكُمُ لَوْ جَدُّ

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا

وَإِنِّي أَنَا زَيْنُ السَّمَاءِ

وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ ۝ إِنِّي أَنَا كَوَاقِبُ

الدُّنْيَا بَرِيَّةٌ ۝ إِنِّي أَنَا كَوَاقِبُ

مَنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مُارِدٍ ۝ إِنِّي أَنَا كَوَاقِبُ

مَنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مُارِدٍ ۝ إِنِّي أَنَا كَوَاقِبُ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

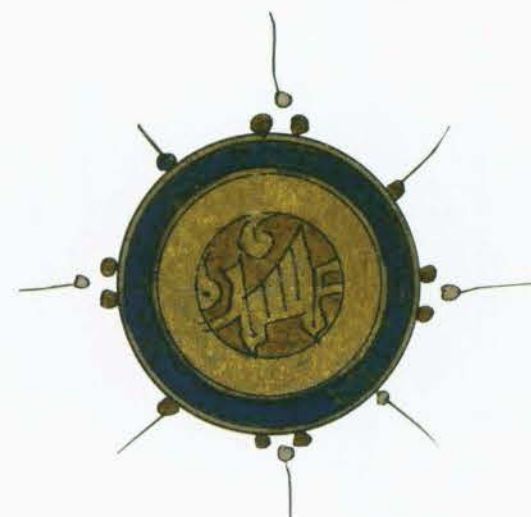
إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقَدِّمُونَ مِنْ

Compilation and Preservation



The Qur'an is the only Divinely revealed religious book in existence that can claim to have been preserved in its original form. This very unique phenomenon is supported by a wealth of historical evidence and occurred over three distinct stages. The first stage was during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the second during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and the third during the Caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (May Allah be pleased with them). The end result is that the Qur'an available today is the same as that during the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Moreover, the fact that the Qur'an itself has been preserved in an unrivalled way unlike any other book in history, fulfils the promise of Allah to preserve the Qur'an from corruption. In support of this fact we read in the Qur'an that Allah has taken it upon Himself to guard and protect it.

“Verily, We have sent down this Remembrance (the Qur'an) and We are of a surety going to protect it (from tampering).”

Surah al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract) 15: 9.

Furthermore Allah says:

“And verily, it is an honourable well-fortified respected Book (because it is Allah's Speech, and He has protected it from corruption).

Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it, (it is) sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise (Allah).”

Surah Fussilat (They are explained in detail) 41: 41-42.

Indeed, not only has the actual text been carefully and faithfully preserved, but the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also preserved background information and many fine details related to each verse; so that its precise meaning could be understood. History shows that the Qur'an was preserved in two ways: 1) memorisation by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his noble companions and 2) writing down of the chapters and verses by the companions as they were revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Memorisation of the Qur'an during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The fact that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ could neither read nor write represents one of the greatest proofs that he did not write the Qur'an himself, but that it was a revelation from Allah.

“He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them (from disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur'an) and wisdom. And verily, they had been before in manifest error.

And He has sent him (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) also to others among them (Muslims) who have not yet joined them (but they will come). And He (Allah) is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”

Surah al-Jumu'ah (Friday) 62: 2-3.

Opposite

Typically elaborate centre pages with an array of rich floral design work from an Afghan Qur'an dating back to around 1780. The calligrapher has used *naskh* style Arabic script with an interlinear *Farsi* translation in red *nasta'liq* script set within a series of finely ruled text blocks. The header text is inscribed in white *thuluth* on a gold panel. The beginning of Surah as-Saaffaat (Those Ranged in Ranks, 37) is shown.

The start of Surah Qaf (50) beautifully hand written in traditional *naskh* style Arabic script from a complete Indian Qur'an dating back to the 17th century. The manuscript is highly decorated throughout with extensive gold and floral detail. The dark spots seen on the lower left of the page are bore marks made by an insect.



Opposite page
Another page from the same Qur'an as above showing Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1).

These verses indicate that Allah chose to send a prophet that could not read or write to deliver His final message to all of mankind. As Allah says in the following verse:

Say: "O mankind! verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah."

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 158.

Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ lack of literacy skills was in itself a great sign from Allah that provided a proof for the Divine Message. This had the affect of assuring people that he could not add or take away from Allah's message, as he was only able to recite what was revealed to him. The people around him would hear the recitation and record it. The Arab nation at the time was largely illiterate and possessed little knowledge of reading and writing, relying heavily instead on the use of memorised poetry. In fact, it is said that during the early Islamic period, there were only seventeen literate people in the whole of Makkah.¹

From the very beginning of Islam, therefore, the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would memorise the Qur'an as it was being revealed so they could recite it in their prayers. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was greatly concerned regarding the preservation of the Qur'an so he actively encouraged the recording of the Qur'an throughout his lifetime; a practice that continues to this very day. The fact that in the year 626 CE, seventy companions who had memorised the Qur'an were killed at the well of Ma'oonah whilst on a teaching mission, provides clear evidence of the great number of Muslims who had already memorised most if not all of the Qur'an during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

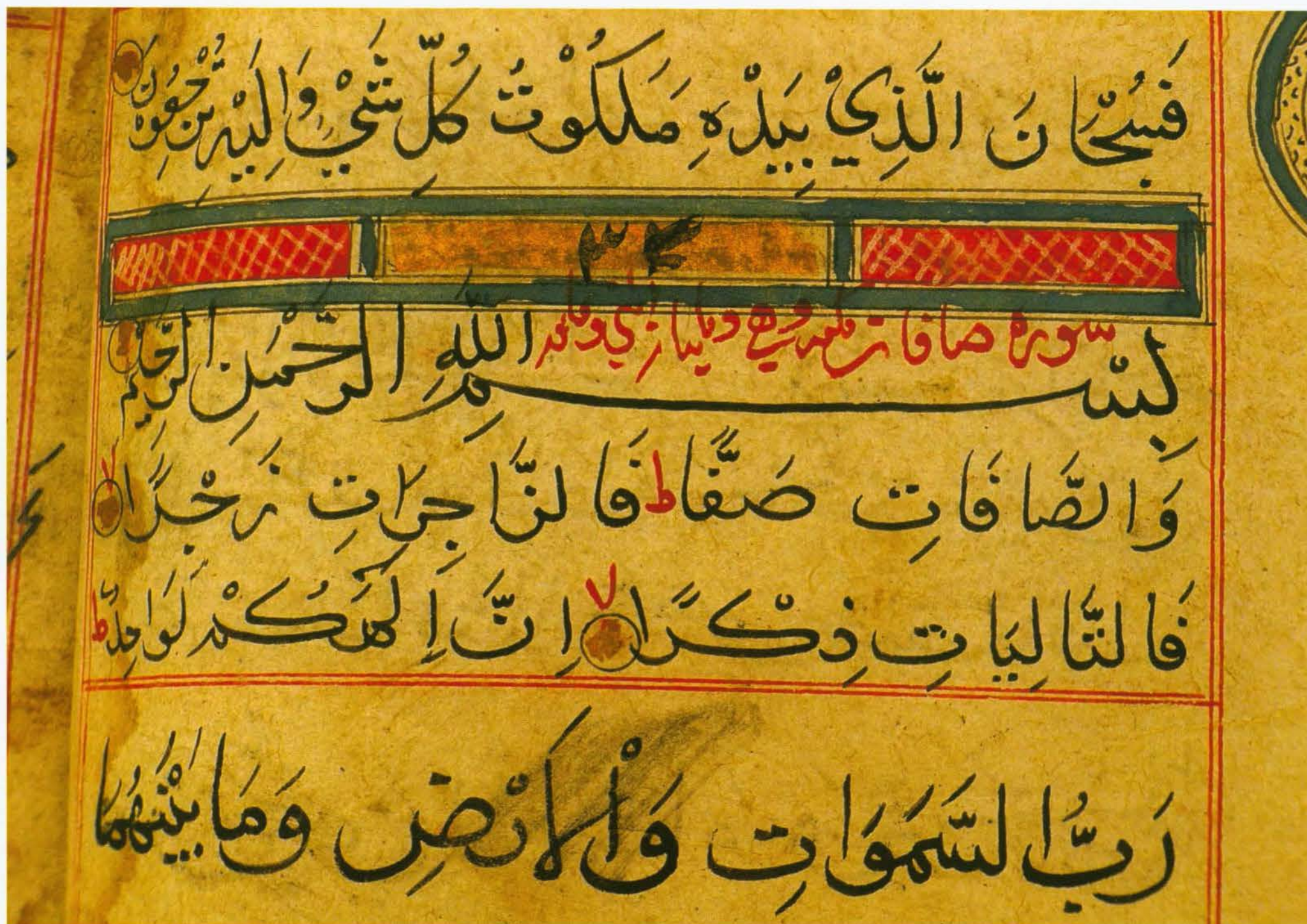
الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ

الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ

الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ



A fine example of a Qur'an written during the Timurid period, 15th century. The text is defined within a red double lined border with the surah title text written in red below a decorative panel. The first portion of Surah as-Saffaat (Those Ranged in Ranks, 37) is shown.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was also very concerned that he may forget the verses of the Qur'an that had been revealed to him. So he would sometimes begin to repeat the verses revealed to him even before the revelation had finished. Allah then reassured him that he would not forget the revelation by telling him:

"Move not your tongue concerning (the Qur'an, O Muhammad ﷺ) to make haste therewith.

It is for Us to collect it and to give you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the ability to recite it (the Qur'an)."

Surah al-Qiyaamah (The Resurrection) 75: 16-17.

It is also known that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to spend large portions of the night in worship by reciting the Qur'an, and Allah provided His Mercy and sent the following revelation:

"Verily, your Lord knows that you do stand (to pray at night) a little less than two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and also a party of those with you.

And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to pray the whole night, so He has turned to you (in mercy). So, recite you of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you."

Surah al-Muzzammil (The One Wrapped in Garments) 73: 20.

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنْ

صَدَرْتُ عَنْ خَيْرٍ لِلصَّابِرِينَ وَاصْبِرُوا مَا صَبَرَكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا

تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

سُورَةُ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ مِائَةً وَخَمْسِينَ آيَةً مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى

الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ

السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ وَاتِّمَامُ مَوْسَى الْكِتَابِ



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
سورة بني اسرائيل
مكية

Surah Bani Israeel (The Children of Israel, 17) starts half way down this manuscript written in *naskh* from India, dated to around 1616 CE by the calligrapher Abdullah al-Khadim. The format is typical of Qur'anic manuscripts from a much earlier period. The page is split into a number of rectangular compartments. There are nine lines of Arabic script per page with the first, fifth and ninth lines written in a larger hand. The side panels have been left blank, but are often decorated with ornaments. The upper marginal ornament on the left hand side indicates the end of the previous surah's last *ruku*, whereas the lower ornament denotes the start of the fifteenth *juz'*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ ○ مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ○
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ○
إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ○ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ○ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ○

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَنَا إِلَهُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
هُدًى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا
أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

Frontispiece from an Indian Qur'an, 17th century. This very small volume is elaborately decorated with use of multiple colours throughout. Written in black *naskh* it has undergone some repair work over the centuries. The pages show the whole of Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the beginning of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2).

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would memorise the Qur'an as it was being revealed, but he would also recite it to others at every opportunity. For example the first man to embrace Islam outside of the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ family was Abu Bakr. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ called him to Islam by reading verses from the Qur'an. Abu Bakr then brought some of his friends including Uthman ibn Affan, Abdur-Rahman ibn Auf, az-Zubair ibn al-Awwan, Talha and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with them all) to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and again he recited verses from the Qur'an and they all entered into Islam.

Similarly, many others such as Abu Ubaidah, Abu Salama, and Abdullah ibn al-Arqam (may Allah be pleased with them all) visited Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to enquire about Islam and he explained it to them and again recited the Qur'an and they accepted Islam.

It was also the practice of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to recite the Qur'an to Angel Jibreel every year during the month of Ramadan. Angel Jibreel would then recite it back to him. However, in the year 632 CE when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away, he recited it twice to Jibreel and the angel recited it twice back to him. It was during this last recital, that one of his main scribes, Zayd ibn Thabit was present. Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her), the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, reported Prophet Muhammad ﷺ confided in her:

"Jibreel used to recite the whole Qur'an to me every Ramadan, but this year he recited it to me twice. I do not see (any explanation for this) except that my time (of death) is near."

(Recorded by Bukhari).

The Writing of the Qur'an in Makkah

As we have seen there is an abundance of historical evidence concerning the preservation of the Qur'an through memorisation by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions in Makkah. It is also an established fact that at his request the Qur'an was written down during his lifetime. The practice of writing started very early in Islamic history. We know for example, that some of the first Muslims would study the chapters and verses of the Qur'an in written form. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), one of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ closest companions, stated that verses revealed in Makkah were recorded in Makkah.²

Furthermore, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi as-Sarh is named as one of the scribes officially engaged in recording the Qur'an during the Makkan period.³ Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As is another official scribe who recorded the Qur'an in the early days of revelation and he stated:

*"I was the first to write down 'Bismillah ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim' (In the Name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful)."*⁴

In another narration, when Rafi ibn Malik al-Ansari attended the gathering at al-Aqaba just prior to the Muslim migration to Madinah in the year 622 CE, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ handed him all of the verses that had been revealed during the previous decade in written form. These would have been written on various materials such as stone, parchment, bones and palm leaves.

Following pages
Beautifully decorated Qur'an leaf written in black *bihari* script with emphasis on important words such as 'Allah' by highlighting in gold. The text is from Surah az-Zumar (The Groups, 39); "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The revelation of this Book (the Qur'an) is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."



Two Qur'an leaves from a late 15th century Qur'an written in bihari script. There are fifteen lines of text per page within a red and black ruled line panel. Diacritical markings are in black and the word 'Allah' is picked out in gold throughout. Small rosettes denote single verses. The brightly coloured marginal ornament made up of a series of concentric circles indicates the end of the second section. The page on the right has part of verse 14 from Surah Saba (Sheba, 34) through to verse 22 on the left.

Once back in Madinah, Rafi gathered his tribe together to read these pages to them. So we see that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not only encouraged the memorisation of the Qur'an, but also the reading of the Qur'an from a written source.

In a narration on this subject Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "A person's recitation without the aid of a mushaf (written copy) elicits a reward of one thousand degrees, but his recitation using a mushaf doubles that reward to two thousand."

(Narrated by Aus ath-Thaqafi narrated, recorded by at-Tabari and al-Baihaqi)

One of the most famous examples of the Qur'an having been written down in the early stages of Islam in Makkah, is during the sixth year of Prophethood when Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) read a parchment containing the first few verses of Surah TaaHaa and accepted Islam.

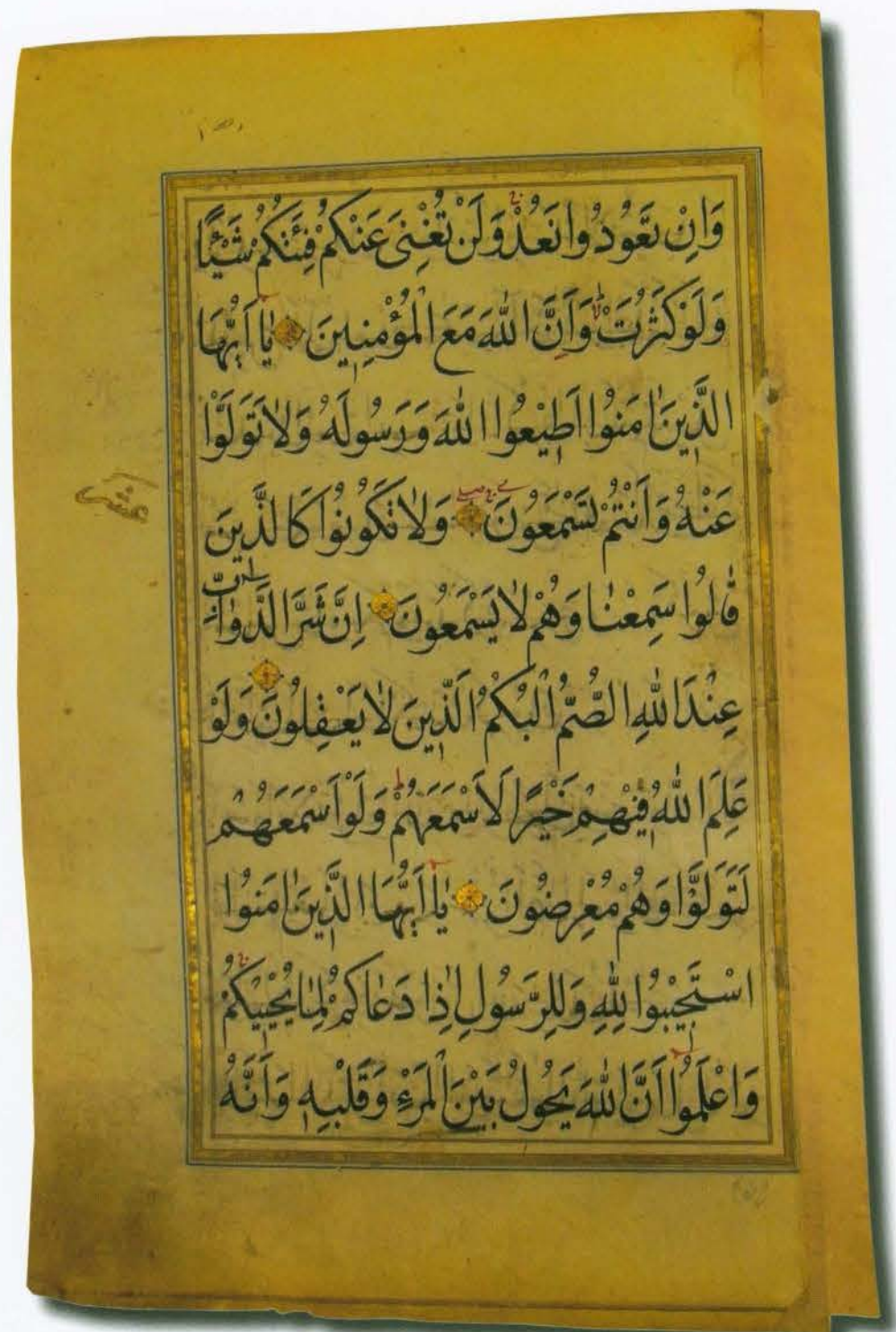
Umar ibn al-Khattab had heard the Prophet ﷺ reciting the Qur'an at the Sanctuary in Makkah; the Prophet ﷺ was reciting Surah al-Haaqqah (69) and Umar narrated: "Then Islam came into my heart."⁵

The recitation had a profound impact on him, as if he had been awoken suddenly from a deep stupor. However, at this point Umar did not become a Muslim. Conflicting emotions between accepting Islam and conforming to the ways of his ancestors held Umar back from becoming Muslim. Sometime later Umar's emotions got the better of him and he set off with the intention of killing Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

However, he would have an encounter along the way that would transform his life forever and see him eventually become one of Islam's greatest personalities, greatly respected to the present day. On his way he met a man who informed him that his sister and her husband had become Muslim. Umar was furious and stormed to his

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 مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حَسَنُهَا
 إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ ۖ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ۖ يَأْتِيهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ
 إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى
 طَعَامٍ غَيْرِ نَاطِرٍ ۖ إِنَاءُ وَكَلَّاتٍ
 إِذَا رُعِمْتُمْ فَاذْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ
 فَانْتَشِرُوا ۚ وَلَا مُسْتَأْنَسِينَ ۚ خُلِيتِ
 أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا ۖ كَانَ يُؤْذِي
 النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَجِيبُ مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا
 يَسْتَجِيبُ مِنْ الْحَقِّ ۖ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ
 مَتَاعًا فَسَأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ
 حِجَابٍ ۚ ذَلِكُمْ لِيُظْهَرَ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ
 وَقُلُوبُهُنَّ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ
 تُؤْذِرُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ





Above left

A small leaf from a Qur'an written in India with simple floral decoration in the margin. The page starts with part of verse 48 from Surah az-Zumar (The Groups, 39) to verse 56.

Above right

A Qur'an page from Banda, dated to around 1790 CE, on paper. There are ten lines of strong black naskh script within a gold border. The tenth verse is indicated by the word *ashara* written in the margin. The page contains Surah al-Anfaal (The Spoils of War, 8), part of verse 19 to part of verse 24.

sister's house. As he drew nearer, he heard the voice of Khabbab ibn Aratt, who was reciting Surah TaaHaa (20) to both of them from some written pages. Khabbab perceiving the noise of his footsteps went further into the house, and Fatimah, Umar's sister, took hold of the page and hid it. But Umar had already heard the voice. "What sound was that I heard just now?" He said, entering angrily. Both his sister and her husband replied, "You heard nothing." "Nay," he said swearing fiercely, "I have heard that you have turned away from your religion."

He moved forward towards his brother-in-law and beat him severely, but Fatimah rushed to the rescue of her husband. Thereupon, Umar fell upon his sister in rage and struck her on the head. The husband and wife could not contain themselves and cried aloud: "Yes we are Muslims, we believe in Allah and His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, so

do what you will." When Umar saw the face of his dear sister smeared with blood, he felt pity and said: "Let me see what you were reading, so that I may perceive what Muhammad has brought."

Fatimah was satisfied with the assurance, but said: "O brother, you are unclean on the account of your idolatry, none but the pure may touch it. So go and wash first." He did so, and took the page and read the opening verses of the Surah TaaHaa from the Qur'an until he reached:

"Verily, I am Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me, and perform As-Salat (the prayers) for My remembrance."

Surah TaaHaa 20:14.

الصلوات واخبتوا الى ربهم اولئك اصحاب
الجنة هم فيها خالدون مثل الفريقين
كالاعشى الاحم والبصير والسميع هل يستوي
مشاؤا فلا تدركون ولقد ارسلنا
نوحا الى قومه اني لكم نذير مبين ان
تعبدوا الا الله اني اخاف عليكم عذاب
يوم اليم فقال المشركون الذين كفروا من قومه
ما نريك الا بشرا مثلكنا وما نريك تتبعك
الا الذين هم ارضنا بادي الرأي وما نرى
لكم علينا من فضل بل نظنكم كذابين
قال يقوم ارايتم ان كنت على بينة من
ربي واتبنى رحمة من عنده فعميت عليكم
انزل مكموها وانتم لها كرهون ويقوم
لا اسئلكم عليه ان اجري الا على الله
وما انا بطاريد الذين امنوا انهم معلقوا
ربهم ولا كفى اراكم قوما تجهلون ويقوم

من نصرتي

من ينصرتي من الله ان طردتهم فلا تدركوا
ولا اقول لكم عندى خزائن الله ولا اعلم
الغيب ولا اقول لى ملك ولا اقول للذين
تنذرى اعينكم لن يؤتيهم الله خيرا الله
اعلم بما فى انفسهم اني اذ المن الظالمين
قالوا ينوح قد جادلنا فاكثرت جدلنا فأتينا
بما تعدنا ان كنت من الصادقين قال
انما يايتكم به الله ان شاء وما انتم بمعجزين
ولا ينفعكم نصحي ان اردت ان انصح لكم
ان كان الله يريد ان يغويكم هو ربكم و
اليه ترجعون ام يقولون افتريه قل
ان افتريته فعلى اجرى وانا بري مما
تجرمون واوحى الى نوح انه لن يؤمن
من قومك الا من قد امن فلا تبتسر
بما كانوا يفعلون واضمح الفلاد عيننا
ووحينا ولا تخاطبني فى الذين ظلموا انهم

وقولون
وقولون
وقولون
وقولون

ع



Beautifully scripted *naskh* leaf from a Qur'an handwritten in Kashmir during the 19th century on gold sprinkled paper. The page is enclosed by a frame border with fourteen lines of text per page with each line set within a cloud motif that is typical of Qur'anic manuscripts from this region. Coloured florets act as verse separators. The page starts with the last three words of verse 129 from Surah al-An'aam (The Cattle, 6) and ends part way through verse 136.



Umar read the verses with great interest and was highly fascinated by them. "How excellent it is, and how graceful! Please guide me to Muhammad," he said.⁶

There are also many other examples of the Qur'an being taught in Makkah and beyond by the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The companions were very devout believers in the message of Islam and were keen to see Islam spread. As the Muslims faced severe persecution there was a great sense of unity and purpose amongst the early Muslims and they helped each other immensely. These early bonds also extended to the teaching of the Qur'an, and many of the companions after learning the Qur'an from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ helped others to learn the Qur'an by providing extra tuition. Ibn Mas'ud was one of the first Muslims to teach the Noble Qur'an in Makkah.

Khabbab, as we have already discussed, taught the Qur'an to Fatimah (Umar ibn al-Khattab's sister) and her husband Sa'id ibn Zayd. The early Muslims also went on to teach the verses of the Qur'an to many tribes outside of Makkah. Companions such as Mus'ab ibn Umayr helped to teach the Qur'an to the people of Madinah, even prior to the migration of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to that city. Zayd ibn Thabit, who would later become one of the scribes of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; when he was presented to the Prophet ﷺ upon his arrival in Madinah, had already memorised sixteen chapters of the Qur'an by the age of eleven. Similarly, Bara stated that he was familiar with the Qur'an from Surah Qaf, even before Prophet Muhammad ﷺ arrived in Madinah. Furthermore, Al-Waqidi stated that the Masjid of Bani Zuraiq was the first mosque to be honoured by the recitation of the Qur'an.⁷

Double pages from a 17th century Qur'an copied in the Indian subcontinent in black *naskh* script with vowel markings and surah titles in red ink. The pages have a simple border frame with additional commentary in the margins. The pages show Surah al-Balad (The City, 90) to the start of Surah al-Alaq (The Clot, 96).



Two sides from a rare Qur'an leaf from an 18th century Qur'an written using *sini* (Chinese) Arabic script from Beijing, China. Simply decorated using light floral patterns and a double lined border. The right hand leaf shows Surah Hud (Prophet Hud, 11) part of verse 31 through to part of verse 35 on the other page. The script is a variation of *muhaqqaq* with some influence from Chinese calligraphy. The long strokes under the line are characteristic of this style.

The evidence shows that the faithful preservation of the Qur'an, both in written form and memorisation, from its first revelation in Makkah is a well documented fact. The Qur'an was being committed to memory by many companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as it was revealed. As well as memorising the Qur'an it was also being written down from the very start of its revelation for the purposes of personal study and teaching others, even during the persecution that the Muslims suffered in Makkah in the early days of Islam.

Furthermore, not only did the companions record the entire Qur'an, they were also in the habit of recording in minute detail the place of revelation, the reason and meaning behind each revelation, even down to the detail of the first person to write 'Bismillah ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim'.

Teaching and memorisation in Madinah

When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ arrived in Madinah in the year 622 CE, life changed completely for the Muslims. In Makkah, the Muslims had been under constant persecution by the pagan Makkans, but now in Madinah all the affairs of life rested in their hands. They were free to build a just society based upon the teachings of the Qur'an. One of the first tasks that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sought to undertake was the construction of a mosque that would act not only as a house of worship but as a sanctuary for the poor and a centre of education.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ continued his practice of encouraging teaching and memorisation of the Qur'an by placing a strong emphasis on education. He set up a school to provide food and shelter to students who would learn literacy.



Up to nine hundred people took up this offer of education. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself would teach the Qur'an whilst companions such as Abdullah ibn Sa'id ibn al-As, Ubaadah ibn as-Saamit and others taught reading and writing in general.

Ubaadah ibn as-Saamit reported: "Whenever a person migrated to Madinah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would assign him to one of us so that we could teach him the Qur'an. Eventually the masjid became so noisy because of all the recitation of the Qur'an that the Prophet ﷺ ordered us to lower our voices so as not to distort the meaning (by mixing all of these verses)." ⁸

On the same topic of teaching Anas ibn Malik commented: "The Prophet ﷺ came to us while we were reciting, among us Arabs and non-Arabs, blacks and whites..." ⁹

Similarly, Abdullah ibn Mughaffal al-Muzani narrates: "When someone of Arab stock migrated to Madinah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would assign someone from the Ansar to that individual saying: 'let him understand Islam and teach him the Qur'an'.

"The same was true with me," he continued, "as I was entrusted to one of the Ansar who made me understand the religion and taught me the Qur'an." ¹⁰

There are numerous other reports from the companions stating that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ recited such and such chapter to them personally, including renowned personalities like Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Abdullah ibn Salam, Hisham ibn Hakim, Umar ibn al-Khattab and Ibn Mas'ud. ¹¹

18th century South East Asian Qur'an neatly written in simple black and red *naskh/jawi* script. Unusually this manuscript is covered in a traditional cloth rather than leather. The pages show Surah an-Nasr (The Help, 110) to Surah an-Naas (Mankind, 114).

Following pages

A page from a 30 volume Chinese Qur'an written in *sini* script, late 17th century, showing part of verse 37 to 38 from Surah Fussilat (They are explained in detail, 41). The green and red lantern shaped ornament with the word *sajdah* indicates that there is a prostration.

A Qur'an from the Far East written during the 19th century in *jawi* script. The red and black marginal device in the page margin has been decorated in a local style and indicates the end of Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder, 13) and the start of Surah Ibraheem (Abraham, 14). The verses are separated by gold coloured circles that sit above the line.

The first compilation of the Qur'an

As a result of all of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ tireless work and devotion to his mission, by the time he passed away in the year 632 CE, the entire Qur'an had been completely written down as well as memorised by many of his companions, all directly from the Prophet ﷺ himself. Many of the Muslims had not only memorised the complete Qur'an but had also substantial written copies of their own. Hence, the information contained within the Divine revelation was protected and clearly available; if any companion needed clarification he could simply ask another companion as numerous copies of chapters and verses of the Qur'an were available in written form. In addition, many of the companions who had memorised the Qur'an were present and they could relate the Qur'an easily and eloquently.

It is also important to note that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not compile the Qur'an into a single reference volume between two covers during his lifetime. This was simply due to the fact that the Qur'an was still being revealed, however the arrangement of the chapters and verses of the Qur'an that we are familiar with today is based upon the instructions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself and are not arranged in some haphazard manner as a few have claimed over the years.¹⁹

When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away, Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq was elected by the companions as the first Caliph of Islam. During the Battle of Yamaamah (12 AH), around seventy companions who had memorised the Qur'an were martyred. Umar ibn al-Khattab was alarmed at the high number of companions being killed so he approached Abu Bakr and said: "Many of those who had memorised the Qur'an have died and I am scared lest more die in later battles. This might lead to the loss of the Qur'an, unless you collect it."

Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq replied, "How can I do that which the Prophet ﷺ did not do?"

Umar ibn al-Khattab however, continued to convince Abu Bakr by highlighting the merits of such an action. Abu Bakr was the first man to accept Islam and understood the needs of the Muslim community well, so he agreed to Umar's suggestion. Abu Bakr and Umar decided that Zayd ibn Thabit was the most suitable person to be put in charge of such an important task. Zayd had been one of the primary scribes of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and as he had also been present at the Prophet's ﷺ last recital to Angel Jibreel during Ramadan, he would have been familiar with the exact arrangement of the Qur'anic surahs. Abu Bakr told him, "You are an intelligent young man, and we do not doubt you. You used to write the revelation for the Prophet ﷺ so we want you to collect the Qur'an." Umar also agreed to lend his full assistance.²⁰

The conditions set upon Zayd ibn Thabit were very strict. Even though many had memorised the Qur'an, a written record of the verses had to be seen before it could be included in the official reference copy. The other companions were told of the project and ordered to bring their written parts of the Qur'an. Those who had memorised the Qur'an were also requested to take part in the project. Caliph Abu Bakr issued a general decree for every eligible person to participate. The task was carried out at the Prophet's Mosque, which had become a central gathering place.

Umar ibn al-Khattab stood at the gates of the Mosque and announced that anyone possessing written verses dictated from the Prophet ﷺ must bring them. Bilal ibn Rabah (may Allah be well pleased with him) announced the same thing through the streets of Madinah.²¹

جَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولِكَ
يَأْتِي بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ يَمْحُو اللَّهُ
مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيدُ
بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفِّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ
الْبَلَاءُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ
نَنقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعْتَدِلَ حُكْمِهِ وَ
هُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَلِلَّهِ
الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ وَسِعَ عِلْمُ الْكَفَّارِ
لِمَنْ عَقَبِيَ الدَّارُ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السَّيِّئُ
قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

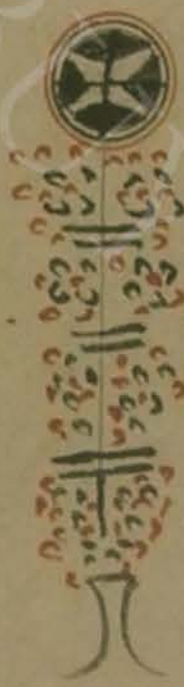
سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ غُلَامُ الْكِتَابِ مَكِّيَّةٌ وَهِيَ اثْنَا وَخَمْسُونَ آيَةً

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ لَنَا آيَاتِهِ لِيُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ

إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ اللَّهُ الَّذِي

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُدْعَى الْعَزِيزُ الْحَمِيدُ



Opposite page

Double pages from a 19th century South East Asian Qur'an written with a thick pen on machine made paper. The script appears to be a local variant of *naskh* written by a neat hand. Note that the *fatha* and *kasra* vowel marks are not straight lines as in most Qur'ans, but have been written as upside down 'ticks' which gives a unique appearance to the whole text. The last section of Surah Taa Haa (20) is on the right hand page with Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets, 21) starting on the left. The writing in red written sideways in the left hand margin indicates the start of the seventeenth *juz'*. The stylized letter *ayn* in red with an Arabic numeral seven on the right hand margin marks the end of the Surah Taa Haa's seventh *ruku*.

Abu Bakr told Zayd and Umar, "Sit at the entrance to the (Prophet's) Mosque. If anyone brings you a verse from the Book of Allah along with two witnesses, then record it." ²²

Zayd later said, "I found the last two verses of Surah al-Bara'a with Abu Khuzaima al-Ansari." ²³

This last point clearly underlines the extent to which the companions went to ensure that this great task was completed accurately. Although, Zayd knew these last two verses, he could not rely on just a written copy of the verses; he had to get confirmation from another companion before including them in the final copy. This very scientific process of checking and validation of the written Qur'anic verses against the memorised ones was undoubtedly a unique phenomena during the time, given the period in which the Qur'an was revealed. Hence, barely two years after Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ passing away and with most of the major companions still alive, the Qur'an had been compiled into a single master reference copy.

This completed copy was not bound into one book between two covers but was kept as loose leaves. The Qur'an was placed into the state archive under the custody of Abu Bakr. Later on in Islamic history it was this Qur'an that served as the master reference for the Uthmanic compilation upon which all subsequent Qur'anic manuscripts to the present day are based. ²⁴

After Abu Bakr's death in 634 CE the master copy stayed with Umar and then with his daughter Hafsah, who was also a wife of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Ali ibn Abi Talib stated, "The person with the greatest rewards with regards to the (compilation) of the *mushaf* is Abu Bakr. May Allah's mercy be on Abu Bakr, he was the first person to compile the Book of Allah." ²⁵

During the rule of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab

Abu Bakr nominated Umar ibn al-Khattab as the next Caliph on his deathbed and entrusted the copy of the master reference Qur'an to Umar. During Umar's reign as Caliph, Islam spread rapidly with the territories of Islam expanding five fold. This naturally meant that the Qur'an also spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Caliph Umar continued the practice enshrined by the Prophet ﷺ by sending out teachers of the Qur'an to the new regions. At least ten companions were sent to Basra and Ibn Masud was sent to Kufa to teach the Qur'an.

As Islam spread to Syria, the governor in Syria, Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan, complained to Umar about the masses of Muslims requiring education in the Qur'an and Islam. So, Umar sent Mu'aadh, Ubada and Abu ad-Darda to Syria and instructed them to proceed to Hims. After achieving their aims Ubada stayed in Hims, Abu ad-Darda' went onto Damascus and Mu'aadh went to Palestine. Abu ad-Darda lived in Damascus for many years and established a highly reputed study circle with over 1600 students. ²⁶

From Madinah, Umar sent Yazid ibn Abdullah ibn Qusait to teach the Qur'an to the outlying bedouins and Abu Sufyan was designated as an inspector to proceed to the tribes and discover the extent to which they had learnt. Umar ibn al-Khattab also appointed three companions in Madinah to teach children, each was given a monthly salary of fifteen dirhams. When Umar was fatally wounded in the year 644 CE, he left the master reference copy of the Qur'an with his daughter Hafsah.

ولذلك تجد من آمن في يوم يات بيانه
الآخر أشد وأيقظ. أفلم يهلكوا أهل
القرون يمشون في مساكنهم في ذوات
ولا حيلة سيقتم تلك الحات لزمانا
فأصبر على ما يقولون وسيخرج بعد
وقيل غدو بها ومن أنا الدليل فستخرج
تترطين. ولا تملكت عينيك أي ما متفانية
وهرة حيوة الدنيا لنفسهم فيه
وأيقظي. وأمره لك بالصلوة واضطر
رزقنا من رزقك والعاقبة للمتقين. وقال
بأية من ربه أولم تأت بهم بيعة ما
الأولي. ولوان أسلكنا في بعدك
لقالوا ربنا لا أرسلنا فينا رسولا
من قبل أن نزلنا ونحزي. قل كل من
فستقلون من أصحاب الصراط السوي ومن

٢٤

ولذلك تجد من آمن في يوم يات بيانه
الآخر أشد وأيقظ. أفلم يهلكوا أهل
القرون يمشون في مساكنهم في ذوات
ولا حيلة سيقتم تلك الحات لزمانا
فأصبر على ما يقولون وسيخرج بعد
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رزقنا من رزقك والعاقبة للمتقين. وقال
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لقالوا ربنا لا أرسلنا فينا رسولا
من قبل أن نزلنا ونحزي. قل كل من
فستقلون من أصحاب الصراط السوي ومن

١٤

ع

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
الذي كنا لنهتدي لهن

Turning pages showing the start of Surah Fussilat (They are explained in detail, 41) and the end of the previous chapter, Surah Ghaafir (The Forgiver, 40) from a complete early 19th century Javanese Qur'an written in *naskh* script on *dluwang* paper. This texture rich paper is made locally from the beaten bark of the mulberry tree and gives the Qur'an a very distinctive appearance.

The Uthmanic compilation

After the death of Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan was elected as the third caliph of Islam by the Muslims. Under his rule, Islam spread even further to many places such as Azerbaijan and Armenia. It was here that Hudhaifa ibn al-Yaman had observed regional differences over the pronunciation of the Qur'an; differences which had caused friction. He was greatly concerned and on his return to Madinah he went to Uthman ibn Affan and said;

"O Caliph, take this Ummah [community] in hand before they differ about their books like the Christians and Jews."²⁷

Uthman was alarmed by this news and convened a gathering of the leading companions of the Blessed Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. After consultation Uthman informed them that in his opinion official reference copies of the Qur'an should be compiled and sent to all of the provinces of Islam; all of the Qur'an fragments were destroyed soon afterwards so that there would be one standard reference copy of the Qur'an within the Muslim community worldwide to avoid disputes.

The leading companions agreed to this idea. Ali ibn Abi Talib said concerning this incident, "O People! Do not say evil of Uthman, but only say good about him. Concerning the burning of the copies, I swear by Allah, he only did this after he had called all of us. He asked us, 'What do you think (should be done) concerning these recitations (in Azerbaijan)? For it has reached me that each party is claiming their recitation is better and this (attitude) might lead to disbelief.' We asked him, 'What do you suggest we do?'

He responded;

'I think we should consolidate the Muslims on one *mushaf*, so that there will not be any disagreements or disunity.' We said, 'Verily this idea of yours is an excellent idea.'²⁸

Uthman went to great lengths to produce the volume he had ordered. Although the Qur'an that Abu Bakr had ordered to be compiled existed with Hafsa, Uthman initially chose not to use this. Instead he instructed that an independent copy be produced from the numerous reliable sources that he had available to him, namely the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The only written material that was accepted from the companions for inclusion was if it had been transcribed in the presence of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself and then double checked by him.

Similarly, only those companions who had memorised the Qur'an directly from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ were used to double check the written material. All of the written and memorised material was then verified against each other before being transcribed into a master copy. This unique process of inclusion and verification led to the production of an accurate Qur'an volume that included the entire Qur'an that had been revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Only when this task had been completed did Uthman ibn Affan have this copy checked against the first copy held by Hafsa.

Uthman went to these considerable lengths to accomplish this task, despite the fact that an official master reference copy existed from the time of Abu Bakr. The reason for this was to show that the Qur'an being prepared under orders from Uthman and the one from the time of Abu Bakr were exactly the same. In addition both copies were the same as the numerous fragments held by the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This process of checking and cross referencing against many sources ensured the authenticity of the Qur'an as a written document as well as perfectly matching with memorised sources. Thus, Uthman ibn Affan not only helped to preserve the Qur'an in its entirety but he also ensured that the Qur'an was universally accepted without question.

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ حَقٌّ قَائِمًا شَرِّكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ
فِي سَبِيلِكُمْ فَمَا الْكَيْدُ إِلَّا يَجْعَلُونَ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ
فِي سَبِيلِكُمْ مَشْهُورُونَ تَوَضُّعًا عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ تَوَضُّعًا لَكُمْ

وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ إِلَّا مَا جَاءَتْ
حُكْمًا أَوْ كِتَابًا مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَذَرْهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ
الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ الْأَشْهَادَ أَشْهَادًا لِّلْبَيِّنَاتِ

وَلَا يَسْتَأْذِنُوا فَمَن تَبِعَهُمُ الْغُلَّامَةُ حَبَجَةً فِي جُحِّهَا
وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْغُلَّامَةِ نَجْمٌ مِّنْ نَّجْمِهَا
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ أَفْئِدَةً يَسِيرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُونَ

فَمَا تَكُنْ إِلَّا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِمْ قَبْلَهُمْ كَانَتْ أَكْثَرُ مِنْهُمْ
وَأَن تَأْتِي فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا أَفْئِدَتُ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانَتْ
جَاءَتْهُمْ سُلُوكُهُمْ يَكْبِتُونَ قَوْلَهُمْ جَمَاعَةً

وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ فَلَمَّا كَانَتْ

مِنْهُمْ



سورة البقرة ما يشاء الله

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي آتَانَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ
وَمَا كُنَّا لِنُحِيطَ بِهِ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّنَا
وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ آيَاتِنَا يُحْيَوْنَ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُحْيِيهِمْ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
فَقُلْ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقَعُونَ
وَسَيُجَنَّبُكَ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ
غُرُورًا

وَسَيُجَنَّبُكَ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ غُرُورًا

An example of a large South East Asian Qur'an, most likely Javanese, with traditional geometric design work in dark red ink, late 18th to early 19th century. Typical of most Qur'ans from this region, the body text is written in black ink with the surrounding decoration in red. Written in *jawi* script on machine made paper, this Qur'an has undergone some damage. The covers have been lost and the opening surah is missing. The image shows the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2).

Another important point to note is that Uthman was able to draw upon a far larger pool of companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in making his reference volume compared to when the original master reference copy had been produced. Many companions had been away on expeditions during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and thus had been unable to participate in the collection of the first master reference copy made during his rule. The fact that the whole process of Uthman's compilation is so well documented in Islamic literature helps to remove any misconceptions that may surround the episode. For instance Ibn Sirin (died 732 CE) reports that:

"When Uthman decided to collect the Qur'an, he assembled a committee of twelve companions from both the Quraysh and the Ansar. Among them were Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Zayd ibn Thabit."

Various sources reveal the names of the committee of twelve as;

1) Sa'id ibn al-As, 2) Nafi' ibn Zuraib ibn Amr ibn Naufal, 3) Zayd ibn Thabit, 4) Ubayy ibn Ka'b, 5) Abdullah ibn az-Zubair, 6) Abdur-Rahman ibn Hisham, 7) Kathir ibn Aflah, 8) Anas ibn Malik, 9) Abdullah ibn Abbas, 10) Malik ibn Abi Amir, 11) Abdullah ibn Umar, 12) Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As.²⁹

Uthman appointed these twelve to manage the monumental task of collecting and tabulating all of the verses written onto parchment in the presence of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Once the task of assembling an independent copy had been completed, Uthman ordered this independently produced Qur'an to be checked against the first official master reference copy produced during the reign of Abu Bakr. Zayd ibn Thabit says, "... Uthman then sent a message to Hafsa, asking to borrow the original manuscript which had been entrusted to her; she gave it to him only after he vowed to return it. In comparing these two, I found no discrepancies. So I gave it back to Uthman and he, with an elated spirit, ordered the people to make duplicate copies of the Mushaf."³⁰

It is interesting to note the active role women played in early Islamic society. Fourteen hundred years ago women in other parts of the world were rarely entrusted with any religious material, however in the Islamic world women played an active role in religion. In this case we see the original master reference copy of the Qur'an was safeguarded by one of the wives of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

With an authenticated copy produced from independent sources and checked against the first reference copy, Uthman then had this copy proof read again in the presence of many companions.³¹ Uthman then asked the scribes to write down the Qur'an, indicating that Uthman wanted the people to make their own copies for their own personal use from his master reference volume. This also eliminated the possibility of accusations that the master copy could have been distorted whilst in the custody of a single person.

Caliph Uthman ibn Affan then took another important decision which the companions accepted. He declared that as official copies of the Qur'an had been prepared and sent out and people had also made their own copies as well, then the need for fragments of the Qur'an held by numerous companions no longer existed. So he ordered the burning of all other loose manuscripts and fragments.³² As many companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ were constantly on expeditions and absent when certain verses were revealed their personal fragments may have been incomplete. So an additional benefit as a result of this action was that it ensured against the possibility of people copying these incomplete personal fragments. Only the complete manuscript that had been agreed upon by all of the companions was to be copied.

Mu'sab ibn Sa'd asserts that the people were pleased with Uthman's decision; at the very least no one voiced any objection. Ali ibn Abi Talib said: "By Allah, he did what he did with these fragments in the presence of us all (i.e. and none of us objected)."³³

A large 19th century Qur'an from South East Asia written using an elegant local variant of *naskh* by an accomplished scribe. There are thirteen lines of text per page written within a framework of black and red ruled lines. The simply drawn red, yellow and green marginal devices act as section markers. The faint horizontal lines running through the paper that are just visible in the detailed view on the opposite page, reveals that the paper is machine made, most likely imported from Europe. The pages show the last part of Surah an-Nahl (The Bee, 16) and the start of Surah Bani Israeel (al-Israa) (The Children of Israel, 17).

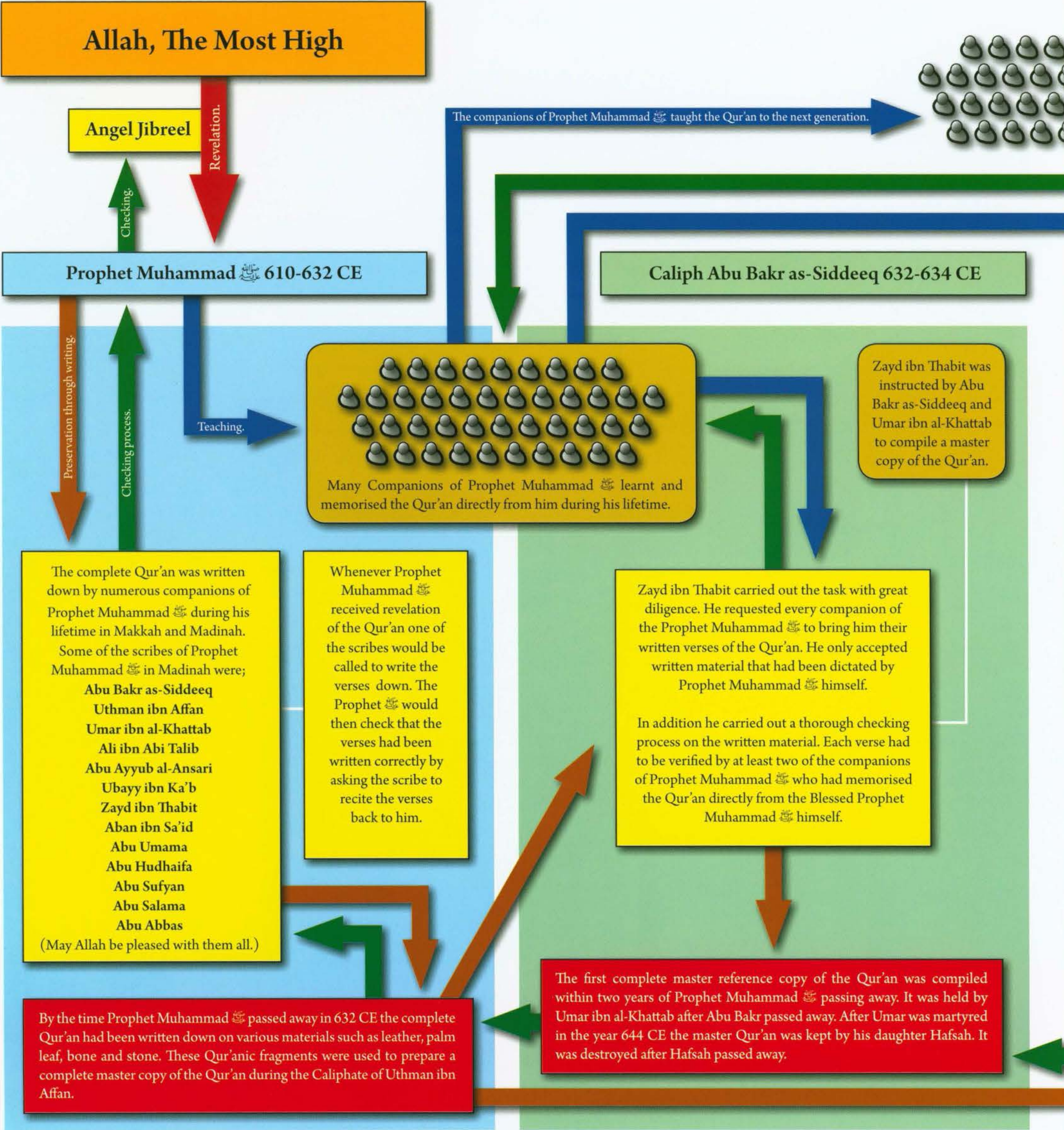


Uthman then sent a number of official copies to various parts of the Muslim world so they could be used as master references. It is believed that eight copies were made, six were sent out, one was kept in Madinah and Uthman kept a copy for himself. Copies are believed to have been sent to Kufa, Basra, Syria, Makkah, Yemen and Bahrain. In addition Uthman sent a *Qari* (teacher) with each copy to instruct people how to recite the Qur'an properly. Zayd ibn Thabit was asked to remain and teach in Madinah, but other companions were sent to different places; 'Abdullah ibn as-Sa'ib was sent to Makkah, Al-Mughira ibn Shihab was sent to Syria, Amir ibn Abd Qais was dispatched to Basra and Abu Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami was sent to Kufa.³⁴

Each of these teachers recited to the people of his respective city in the manner that he had learnt it through authenticated multiple channels going back to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Sending a Qur'anic scholar with every Qur'an, therefore, ensured that proper recitation and teaching was dependant on the learning through direct contact with teachers who could trace their source of knowledge directly back to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Thus, Uthman ensured the official copies of the Qur'an existed as a standard around the Muslim world, and from this many thousands upon thousands of public and private copies of the Qur'an were produced and continue to be produced to this present day. In summary, Uthman ensured that the Qur'an was preserved in the same state as it was Divinely revealed. To this day all written copies are based upon the standard official copy of the Qur'an which Uthman had ordered be produced. Uthman also ensured that the manner of recitation was based upon teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; thus ensuring nothing was lost or altered in pronunciation. The Divine Protection of Allah, the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the decisions by Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them) as well as all of the other companions ensured that the Qur'an available today is the same Qur'an which was Divinely revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over 1,400 years ago. As a sign of Allah's promise to preserve the Qur'an, the fact that the Qur'an has survived intact into the modern technological age has meant that its future preservation is now even more secure than at any other time in Islamic history.

Summary of the Compilation and Preservation of the Qur'an from 610 to 656 CE.



The companions of the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in turn taught the Qur'an to the next generation. In this way the Qur'an has been passed through the generations through teaching and memorisation.

The result today is that there exists an unbroken chain of oral transmission leading directly back to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Uthman's Qur'an was double checked by numerous companions who had memorised the whole Qur'an.

Caliph Uthman ibn Affan 644-656 CE

By the time Uthman ibn Affan became Caliph, the Islamic world had spread to encompass a vast region. In order to prevent disputes arising over the correct pronunciation of the Qur'an he ordered that an official reference Qur'an should be written and sent to the main areas of the Muslim world. For this task he appointed a committee of 12 companions.

Sa'id ibn al-As,
Nafi' ibn Zuraib,
Zayd ibn Thabit,
Ubayy ibn Ka'b,
Abdullah ibn az-Zubair,
Abdur-Rahman ibn Hisham,
Kathir ibn Aflah,
Anas ibn Malik,
Abdullah ibn Abbas,
Malik ibn Abi Amir,
Abdullah ibn Umar,
Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As.
(May Allah be pleased with them all.)

The committee's first task was to compile a Master Qur'an volume that would act as a reference source; from which all subsequent copies would be made. Even though the first master volume that was held by Hafsah was available, the committee decided to produce their own independent copy from the numerous Qur'an fragments held by the companions and from those that had memorised the Qur'an. Once complete they would compare it against Hafsah's Qur'an. They also had access to a far greater number of companions compared to Abu Bakr's compilation, as many had been away on expeditions.

Uthman ibn Affan instructed the scribes in Madinah to make eight official copies of the Qur'an. These copies were then sent to various parts of the Islamic world. Uthman also dispatched a *Qari* (reciter) along with each copy to teach people how to recite the Qur'an correctly. Copies were sent to; Kufa, Basra, Syria, Makkah, Yemen and Bahrain. The two remaining copies were kept in Madinah, one of these was for the Caliph himself.

From the Qur'an teachers Zayd ibn Thabit is known to have stayed in Madinah. Abdullah ibn as-Sa'ib was sent to Makkah. Al-Mughira ibn Shihab was sent to Syria. Amir ibn Abd Qais was sent to Basra. Abu Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami went to Kufa. (May Allah be pleased with them all.)

All present day copies of the Qur'an are based on this early compilation and remain unchanged from their original form as revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Uthman instructed the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to make their own personal copies of the Qur'an. Uthman then ordered that all loose fragments of the Qur'an to be burnt, after consulting with the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Uthman's master reference Qur'an was completed and was proof read in front of many companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.



Uthman's Qur'an was compared to the first manuscript held by Hafsah and no discrepancies were found.

Qur'anic fragments were used to prepare the Qur'an volume ordered by Caliph Uthman.

KEY

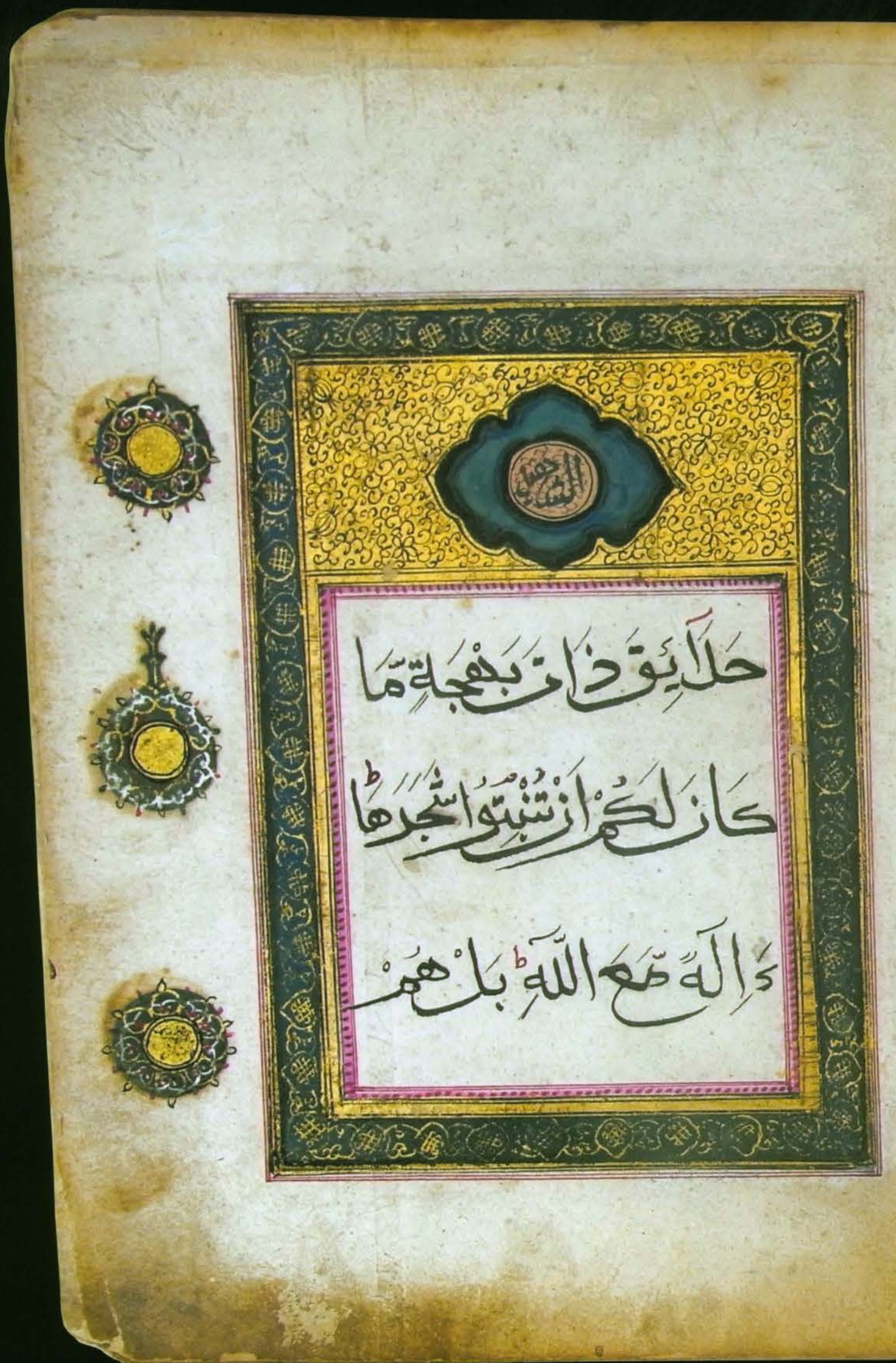
Checking process.

Written transmission.

Oral transmission.

Decorative opening pages from a 30 volume Chinese Qur'an written in classical *sini* script, late 17th century or possibly early 18th century CE. Apart from the last two words, the whole of verse 60 from Surah an-Naml (The Ants, 27) is written across both pages: "Is not He (better than your gods) Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water (rain) from the sky, whereby We cause to grow wonderful gardens full of beauty and delight? It is not in your ability to cause the growth of their trees. Is there any illah (god) with Allah? Nay, but they are a people who ascribe equals (to Him)!"

There are three lines of large *sini* style text per page set within a plain panel surrounded by a framework of dark green and gold geometric designs. The *shamsa* roundels in the margins are for decorative purposes only.



أَمَّا خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
الْأَرْضِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْمُمْ
السَّحَابَ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ



Superbly illustrated centre pages with the start of Surah Bani Israeel (The Children of Israel, 17) from a 17th century Qur'an written in *naskh* script from the Indian subcontinent with some influence from Persia. There are seven lines of text per page within a ruled central panel surrounded by a sea of multi-coloured flowers. This particular Qur'an lacks the traditional cloud-motif around the body text. The fine artwork and symmetry present the reader with a dramatic display. The text is written on polished paper and is well bound with a fine hard leather cover.





النَّاسِ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۚ وَكَأَنزِلُوكَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ
 رُجُومًا ۖ وَلَئِكَ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ ۖ وَوَعَدْتُكَ
 كَأَمَلَاتٍ جَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْهَدَ
 نَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ الْمُرْسَلِ مَا بَشَّرْتُ بِهِ
 وَلَئِكَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُتَسَاوِينَ ۖ وَكَرِهِي
 مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَقَدْ لَدُنَّكَ كَأَيُّوهُنَّ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَى
 نَبَاتٍ ۖ أَنَا عَامِلُونَ ۖ وَأَنْتُمْ تَخْشَوْنَ ۖ أَنَا مُسْخَرُونَ
 وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَالْأَلَمِ يُرْجَى ۖ
 كُلُّهُ نَاعِبٌ ۖ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَمَا رَبُّكَ
 عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۖ **سورة يوسف عليه السلام مكية احدى**
جس
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الَّتِي تَلَاكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ۖ أَنَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ
 قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۖ خَلَقْتُ نَقْصُ

مَنَ الْقَصَصِ ۖ مَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ حَدِّ الْقُرْآنِ
 رُكُوتٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ ۖ لَمِنَ الْخَافِلِينَ ۖ **ا** إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ
 يٰ أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ
 وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ۖ **ق** قَالَ يٰ أَبَتِ مَا تَقْصُصُ
 عَلَيَّ ۖ يَا كَذَّابٌ ۖ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۖ إِنَّ
 الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۖ **و** كَذَلِكَ
 بَشَّرْنَاكَ رَبُّكَ وَيَعْلَمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ ۖ وَيَسِّرْ
 لَكَ مَا تَشَاءُ ۖ وَكَأَيُّ الْيَقِينِ ۖ **و** إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ
 لِّأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ ۖ إِنِّي بِكَ خَوِيفٌ ۖ وَخَوِيفٌ ۖ **و** إِذْ قَالَ
 يُوسُفُ لِّأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ ۖ إِنِّي بِكَ خَوِيفٌ ۖ وَخَوِيفٌ ۖ **و** إِذْ قَالَ
 يُوسُفُ لِّأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ ۖ إِنِّي بِكَ خَوِيفٌ ۖ وَخَوِيفٌ ۖ **و** إِذْ قَالَ

A 16th century section (12th juz') of the Qur'an written in *bihari* script from India. Each page contains 13 lines of text written in black ink. Simple circular patterns mark the end of each verse. The pages are open on the end part of Surah Hud (11) and the start of Surah Yusuf (Joseph, 12). The elongated letter *ayn* drawn in the left margin marks the end of the surah's first part.



A similar 16th century Qur'an volume (28th juz') to the one shown on the previous page; again hand written in bihari script from India. Each page contains 13 lines of text written in black ink. Simple red shapes mark the end individual verses. This section has some damage in the form of bore holes caused by insects. The pages are open on the start of Surah al-Jumu'ah (Friday, 62).

A volume from part of a set of thirty, written in a variant of *bihari* script using dark red ink for vowels, late 16th or 17th century. The calligrapher has used an acidic ink that has caused the text to show through the page. Starting with part of verse 120 from Surah Taa Haa (20) continuing to the end of the surah. The last line on the left hand page is the surah header showing the start of Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets, 21) overleaf.

لَكَانَ لَنْ اَمَّا وَاجِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرَ عَلَى مَا يَفْسُدُونَ وَتَسْمَعُ
 بِجَهَنَّمَ يَكْفُلُ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ اَنْتَاءِ
 الْبَيْلِ قَسِيْمٌ وَاَطْرَافِ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ وَمَا مَكَانٌ عَمَّا يَكْفُرُ
 اِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهَا اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةً اُخْيُوهُ اَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمُ الْغَيْبُ
 عِيَادَةٌ وَرَزَقُكَ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقَىٰ وَاَمَّا اَهْلُكَ بِالْقُلُوبِ وَاصْطَبِرْ
 عَلَيْهِمْ اَلَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَّحْنُ نَمُزُّكَ وَالْعِصْبَةُ لِلَّذِيْنَ وَقَالُوا
 لَوْلَا يَأْتِيَنَّاهُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ اَوْ لَمْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّا فِي الصُّحُفِ
 الْاُولَىٰ وَلَوْ اَنَّا اَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بَعْدَ اِيَّاكَ قُلْ فَبَلِّغْ لِقَالِهِمْ رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا
 اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا رَسُوْلًا بَتَّبِعْ اِيْتِيكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَكُوْنُ اَوْخَرُيْ
 فَاَكُلْ تَرَبَّصْ تَرَبَّصُوْا فَلْيَنْصَبُوْا فَاَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّكُمُ الْبَصَرُ
 اَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّكُمُ الْبَصَرُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّكُمُ الْبَصَرُ
 سُوْرَةُ الْاَنْبِيَاءِ مَكِّيَّةٌ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَلَى شَجَرَةٍ تَخْلُجُهَا الْمَلَكُ لَا يَنَالُهَا فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ تَأْكُلَهُمَا
 لِسَةً ذَاتَ طَبْعٍ فَلَمَّا أَحْصَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ قَبْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَحَمَضِي
 الْحَمِيمِ رَبَّهُمْ فَقَوَّيَا ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُمَا فَتَبَّ عَلَيْهِمَا وَفَعَلَا قَالَ
 اضْمِطَّامِنَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَلَمَّا بَلَغْتُمْ
 مِنْهَا قُدْرَتِي فَمِنَ الْقَوْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ بَلَّالِيضًا يَنْشَلُونَ مِنْهُنَّ عُذْرًا
 عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَعْبُدَكَ خَدَاوَا وَنَحْمُسُ رَبَّنَا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ
 الْفِتْنَةَ أَفْعَمْنَا فَلَمَّا نَزَلَ حَشْرُ رَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَى فَكَفَّكَ عَنْ بَصَرِهِ
 فَالْتَمَسَ إِلَيْكَ أَتَيْتُكَ بِنِسِيَّتِهَا وَكَذَّبْتُكَ إِلَيْكَ الْيَوْمَ
 تَنْسُو وَكَذَّبْتُكَ إِلَيْكَ فَجَزَيْتَنِي مِنَ الشَّرِّ وَأَنْتَ الْمَرْبُّ يَا رَبِّ
 رَبِّهِمْ وَلَقَدْ أَجَابُوا لَأُفْرَجَتْ أَشْدُّ وَأَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِعَمَلِهِمْ
 كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْعُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاجِدِهِمْ
 لَنْ يَنْفَعَهُمْ إِلَهِكَ وَلَا إِلَهِ الْبَنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْفِطُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ دُونِ



Two examples of typical Indonesian style opening pages from Qur'ans dated to around the late 18th to early 19th century. The opening text on the top Qur'an is set within a frame panel surrounded by dense foliate decoration. The second example is brightly coloured with orange and blue geometric shapes.



Further Indonesian Qur'ans written in a local variation of *naskh* script, dated to the early 19th century. The top manuscript has fifteen lines of text per page set within red and black ruled lines. Saffron coloured markers have been used to differentiate individual verses. The start of Surah al-Ankaboot (The Spider, 29) and the last few verses of Surah al-Qasas (The Narration, 28). The text of the lower example is set within a traditional geometric design with central hasp shapes projecting into the margins.

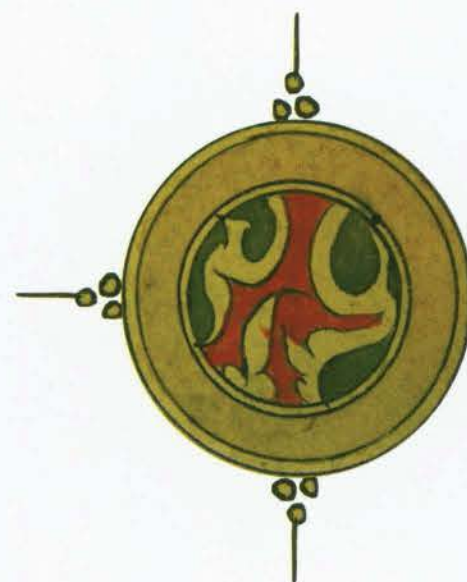
أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ لَّيْسَ لَكَ كَرَمٌ وَأَنَا لَهُ لِعَطْوٍ

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ لَّيْسَ لَكَ كَرَمٌ وَأَنَا لَهُ لِعَطْوٍ

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ لَّيْسَ لَكَ كَرَمٌ وَأَنَا لَهُ لِعَطْوٍ

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

The Qur'an Through the Ages



Allah's promise to preserve the Qur'an is supported by an enormous wealth of historical evidence in the form of Qur'an manuscripts that date back to the very first century of Islam. A book that has resisted any alterations for over fourteen centuries is itself sufficient proof of its Divine origin. Qur'anic manuscripts form one of the largest groups of historical manuscripts in the world, with numerous high quality examples surviving to this present day.

Islamic history spans a vast area of the world stretching over three continents. From the Mamluks of Egypt and Mughals of India to the Sultans of Damascus and Muslim Spain along with the countless scribes, calligraphers, lay people and the numerous great scholars of the past, they have all played their part in helping to preserve the Qur'an. Regardless of the era or the region in which Qur'anic manuscripts have been copied over the last 1400 years, or the style of writing used, it is well established that no two copies differ in their content. In fact the original manuscripts compiled by Uthman ibn Affan are still in existence today with copies held in the Topkapi Saray museum in Istanbul and in Tashkent.

Two of the main hallmarks of Islamic civilisation over the centuries have been the contribution to the development of mathematics and science, and in the arts with the extensive use of calligraphy. Beautifully written verses of the Qur'an have adorned the interior and exterior walls of mosques and minarets for centuries.

From the 7th century, writing in Arabic script became the main theme of Islamic visual culture as Islam spread to encompass a vast area of the globe. The origins of written

Arabic script, however, can be traced to at least as far back as the 3rd century CE; there are numerous examples of ancient rocks in Arabia engraved with Arabic writing.¹

As discussed previously, by the time Uthman ibn Affan became the third Caliph of Islam, a definitive reference copy of the Qur'an was compiled, written in large consonant heavy *kufic* script from the original writings of the companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Eight copies of the scripture were written in total and then sent to all provincial parts of the Islamic world to ensure that all copies of the Qur'an were exact. The original reference copy of the Qur'an, upon which all subsequent copies are based, was retained in Madinah. It remained in Madinah until it was taken to Istanbul in the early part of the twentieth century. The results of Uthman's endeavours are clear in at least two ways. Firstly, every Muslim province gained access to the Qur'an and secondly, this ensured that the skeletal text would not be altered in any way.

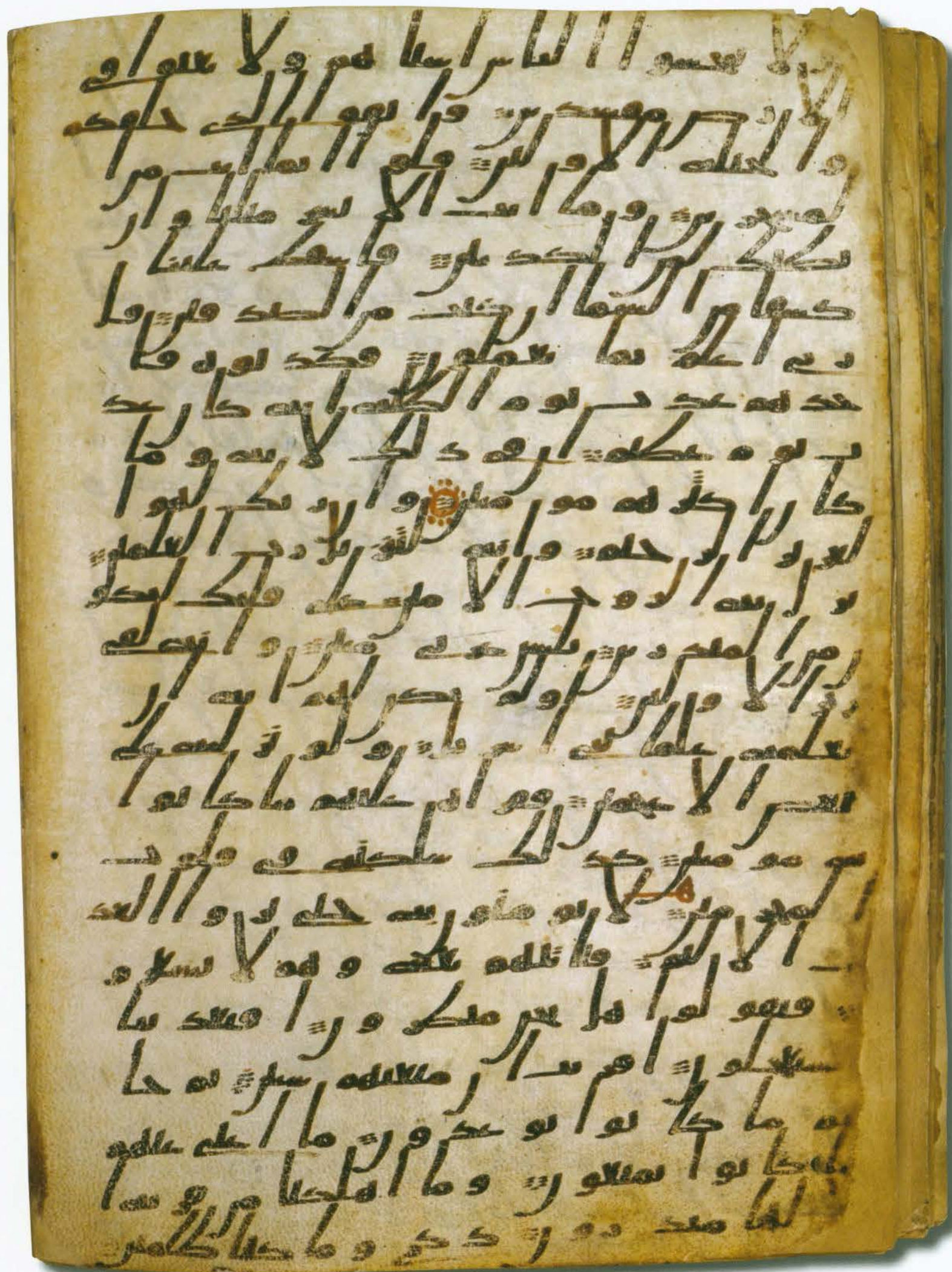
Development of writing styles

During the first and second centuries of Islam (7 - 8th century CE) sloping and angular writing styles had gained prominence. *Hijazi* script is usually considered to be one of the earliest types of Arabic writing known. Sometimes referred to as *ma'il*, or leaning script, the main characteristic of *hijazi* is its slight slant to the right. One of the oldest known extant manuscripts of the Qur'an compiled during the 8th century (circa. 150 AH) is written in this rare script. Known as the *Ma'il Qur'an* (see the image on the following page) this codex contains over two thirds of the Qur'anic text.

Opposite

The image shows the development of Qur'anic reading aids through the ages. Although the script type used today may have developed over time to make the Qur'an easier to read, the actual Arabic words have remained the same. All four fragments are the same verse, "**Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian.**"

Surah al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract) 15:9. The top most fragment from the Qur'an is from the early Islamic period and lacks skeletal dots and vowel markings. The second, third and fourth lines show the addition of reading aids to help correct pronunciation. The reading aids have no impact on the meaning of the words, which have remained the same for over 14 centuries. The image has been adapted from the cover of Professor Muhammad al-Azami's monumental work; *The History of The Qur'anic Text*. UK Islamic Academy, 2003.



A vellum page from a Ma'il Qur'an written in *ma'il* (or *hijazi*) script originating from the Hijaz region of Arabia and dated to around the 8th century CE (1st/2nd century AH). This type of script was popular in the Arabian peninsula at the time of revelation of the Qur'an. The text is consonant heavy and written in a continuous format without separation between verses. There are no diacritical marks or letter dots. Every tenth verse is marked by a red hollow circle surrounded by dots. Given the remarkable age of the manuscript it is enlightening to see that the text of the Qur'an has not changed at all. The page starts with verse 183 from Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets, 26) to the end of 209. Location: British Library, London.



The *Ma'il* Qur'an is written on vellum in single column format using large letters devoid of diacritical marks (*tashkeel*) and dots (*nuqat*). There are circular marks to indicate the endings of the verses. Another characteristic of these early Qur'anic manuscripts was that at the end of a line, a single word was often broken into parts, with half of the word starting on the next line.

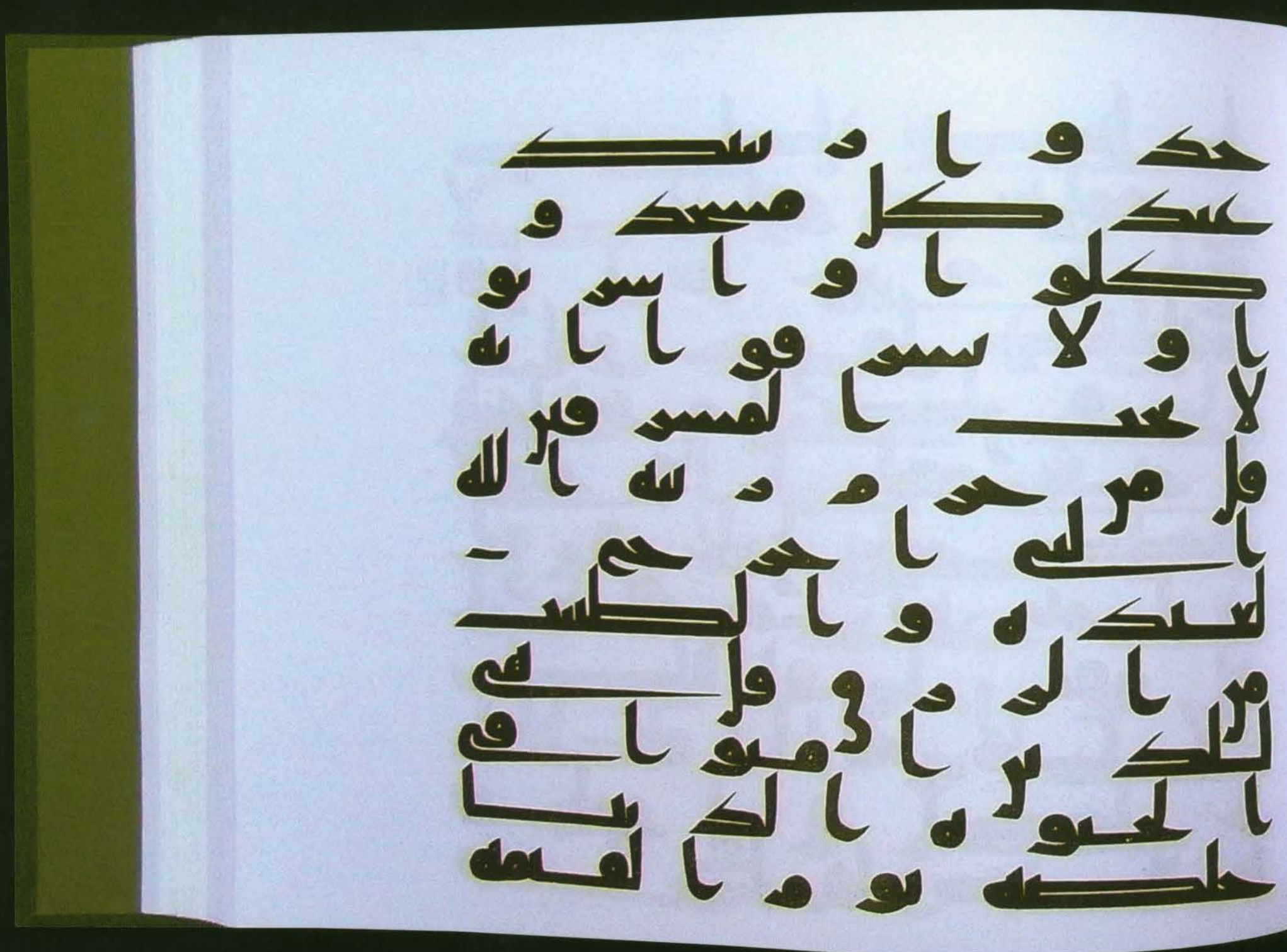
The other main group of scripts in use during the early Islamic period were the geometric scripts known as *kufic*. Due to its strikingly angular and very stylized form, *kufic* was also used extensively in architectural decoration either on stone or mosaic. We also know that Caliph Uthman ibn Affan's original manuscripts were written in this type of style and would have lacked skeletal dots or any other markings. The Qur'an held in Tashkent (see the following pages) is thought to be one of the original Uthmanic copies as it is devoid of any vowel markings or verse separators. Similarly, the Qur'anic manuscript held in the Topkapi Palace museum in Istanbul (see pages 271 & 273) is most likely one of Uthman's originals, possibly even Uthman's personal copy that stayed in Madinah for centuries and then found its way to Istanbul around 100 years ago. Some historians regard this Qur'an as a copy of Uthman's original made a few decades later due to the presence of a limited dotting scheme and some verse markers; although these could have been added to the manuscript at a later date. However, Caliph Uthman ibn Affan himself was most likely familiar with these devices as Malik ibn Abi Amar al-Abashi had included surah and verse separators in his own personal copy of the Qur'an during preparation of the official Uthmanic copies.²

Caliph Uthman's decision to minimise written vowels and avoid the use of verse separators and dots was most probably meant as a deterrent to those who would try to memorise the Qur'an by themselves without proper guidance. Therefore, it is quite plausible that the Qur'anic manuscript held at the Topkapi museum in Istanbul is indeed Uthman's personal copy, even though it does contain a limited marking scheme. Regardless of the above, the manuscript is at the very least a complete 7th century copy of one of the original Uthmanic Qur'ans, upon which all subsequent Qur'ans are based.

Development of Qur'anic reading aids

As Islam spread and grew beyond the Arabian peninsula, it became apparent that in order to aid correct pronunciation of the Qur'an, a system of reading aids would have to be developed. In 688 CE Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali introduced a system of diacritical markings, known as *tashkeel* in Arabic, to indicate short vowels. Ad-Du'ali introduced four markings that took the form of red coloured dots above or below letters to differentiate them from skeletal dots that were usually written in black ink. The manuscript shown above is a very characteristic example of the Ad-Du'ali system. In this manuscript the base text of the Qur'an is easily discernable from the additional markings. The *tashkeel* are in red and the *nuqat* dots are written in a fine pen in black ink. A single dot placed after, on or below the letter represented a *damma*, *fatha* or *kasra*, whereas two dots indicated double vowels, i.e. *damma tanween*, *fatha tanween*, or *kasra tanween*.

A Qur'an written in *kufic* script using a horizontal format, 9th century. The manuscript provides a good example of the ad-Du'ali system of diacritical markings, known as *tashkeel* in Arabic, that was introduced in 688 CE. Red dots are used for the *fatha*, *damma* and *kasra* vowel marks and green dots indicate glottal stops. The large gold roundel indicates the end of the tenth verse. The text on the right hand page is from Surah al-Ankaboot (The Spider, 29) verses 23 to 26. The left hand side is from Surah Luqmaan (32) verses 21 to 25. Location: British Library, London.



Copy of the consonant heavy Qur'an commissioned by Caliph Uthman ibn Affan. The text is devoid of dots and diacritical markings and is written in a large kufic type script without any separation between verses. One of the eight copies of the Qur'an made by Caliph Uthman originally sent to Damascus was carried away as a war trophy to Samarqand by Timur Lenk (1336-1405). In 1868 the Russians occupied the city and the copy was transferred to St Petersburg. After the downfall of the Czarist regime, a Muslim General, Ali Akbar Topchibashi, sent a soldier to the Imperial Palace to retrieve the Qur'an and despatched it to Tashkent, where it has remained to this day.

In 1905, Czar Nicholas II published about 50 copies of a facsimile edition in St Petersburg. The rare copy shown in the image above was acquired by Exhibition Islam and is based on a microfilm copy of one of the St Petersburg prints. Although numerous pages have been lost over the centuries from the original copy held in Tashkent, it is inspiring to see that the facsimile copy clearly shows that the original Qur'anic text is identical to the Qur'an in circulation today. The page on the right hand side starts part of the way through verse 29 from Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights, 7) on the word *wadh u'hoo*. The text continues through to verse 32 on the left hand page ending on the words *yaw-mal qiyaamaa*.

وَاذْكُوا وَهَاجِرُوا
 لِهَاجِرِكُمْ كَمَا تَكُونُ
 كُمْ تَكُونُ وَرَمَوْا
 هَاجِرَكُمْ وَرَمَوْا
 الْبَطْلَ أَنْتُمْ أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ
 وَأَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ
 كَذِبًا أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ
 هُمْ هَاجِرُونَ وَرَمَوْا

Right

A 9th century CE Qur'an page in a compact *western kufic* script from North Africa. Written on vellum using brown ink with red, yellow and green diacritics for help with recitation. This manuscript provides a good example of how *kufic* script began to develop a more rounded appearance; *kufic* scripts were eventually superseded by more rounded cursive styles from the late 10th century onwards. The page also highlights the widespread use of reading aids to help with correct pronunciation. These were adopted as the result of the spread of Islam outside of the Arabian peninsula. The page starts with the word *ragadan* from the middle of verse 35 and ends in the middle of verse 41 on *ma-a-kum wa laa* from surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2).



Opposite

Two vellum Qur'an leaves written in *kufic* script, Abbasid, 10th century CE. There are eleven lines of text on each page written in brown ink with red, green and with black diacritical dots. The top page shows verses from Surah al-Mulk (The Dominion, 67), starting with the fifth to last word (*bikumul ar-dha*) of verse 16 and ends in the centre of the last word of verse 20 (*ghuroor*). The lower image starts from the middle of the word *diyaari-kum* of verse 8, from Surah al-Mumtahanah (The Woman to be examined, 60) and ends in the middle of the tenth verse; *tarji-oo-hunna ilaa*.

Verse endings are marked by a pyramid of three gold dots. The larger circular design indicates the tenth verse. Furthermore, by this time words also tended to be written together and were no longer split over two lines. Another point of interest is the fact that calligraphers would vary the amount of markings depending on the reading abilities of the person for whom the manuscript was being prepared.

Around a century later the marking scheme introduced by Ad-Du'ali was further developed by Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Fraheedi, who replaced the coloured dots with shapes resembling the different symbols that we are familiar with today.³ With the passage of time, as Islam spread to non-Arab parts of the world, the inclusion of vowel markings, dotting schemes, surah and verse separators became the norm to aid correct pronunciation of the Qur'an. It must be stressed that these additions bore no effect on the pronunciation of words or the meaning of verses.

The 10th century onwards saw a number of changes to Qur'an formats taking place in terms of size, decoration and materials used, together with the development of more rounded or cursive styles of writing alongside *hijazi* and *kufic*. Other developments included the widespread use of chapter headings, verse separators, illumination and marginal ornaments to indicate prostration, or various subdivisions of the Qur'an such as a *manzil* (division into 7 equal parts) or *juz'* (division into 30 equal parts). Many of these developments were due to the greater use of paper rather than vellum, which was costly. In fact it was the mass production and use of paper throughout the Islamic world that helped to not only preserve the Qur'an, but also drove literacy in general and made possible the Golden Age of Islamic Science that lasted well into the 16th century. Even as early as the 10th century, Muslim centres of learning such as Cordoba in Spain and Baghdad in Iraq boasted hundreds of libraries, each containing thousands of volumes. The extent and advancement of Islamic scientific achievements becomes self evident as history shows that there were probably more books in these two cities alone than the whole of Western Europe put together.

بسم الآلهة والرب فاعلموا
مأمنكم من في السما والارض
عليكم حكاما فستعلمون كيف
تكونون في افك حكاما
من قلوبهم فكيف حكاما
او لم يكونوا الى السيلو فو قلوبهم
كفهم من افكهم ما يمسكهم
الا انهم حزم انهم في السيلو
امن امك انهم في السيلو
لهم السيلو لهم من السيلو
حزم انهم الكفر في السيلو

كَمْ اَنْ تَبُوهُمْ وَ تَقْسِطُوا اِلَيْهِمْ
 اِنَّ اِلَهَكُمْ خَلْقُ السَّمَكِطِ اِنَّمَا
 يَنْهٰيكُمْ اِلٰهٌ خَيْرٌ الَّذِيْنَ قَتَلُوْكُمْ
 فِي الدِّيْنِ وَ اَخْرَجُوْكُمْ مِنْ
 دِيَارِهِمْ وَ ظَلَمُوْا اَحْيَا
 اَحْيَاكُمْ اَنْ تَبُوهُمْ وَ مِنْ يَتَّبِعُوْ
 لَهُمْ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُوْنَ يَا
 أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اِيَّاكُمْ جَاءَكُمْ
 اَلْمَوْءُظِفَةُ مَهَا جَرَا بَ فَاَقْبِلُوْ
 مِنْ اِلٰهٍ يٰ اَحْمَدُ يٰ اِيْمَنُ فَاَنْزِلْهُمْ
 هَلْ مَوْءُظِفَةُ فَلَا تَقْجِسُوْهُمْ اِلٰى

Right
 Qur'an leaf written in *western kufic* script written on vellum using brown ink with red, yellow and green diacritics for help with recitation, 10th Century CE North Africa. Verses 30-35 of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) are shown.



Opposite page
 The Arabic text for "In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful" taken from twenty different Qur'ans showing examples of different script styles over the centuries. Note that the 14th century Mamluk *ornamental kufic* is a surah header panel from Surah an-Naas (Mankind, 114).

As Islam spread beyond the Middle East, the cursive styles of writing began to supersede the older *hijazi* and *kufic* scripts by the late 10th century CE. *Naskh* script developed by Ibn Muqlah (886-940 CE) became one of the most popular scripts for writing Qur'an manuscripts mainly due to its legibility. By the middle of the 11th century the older script styles were mainly being employed for decorative purposes and decoration of surah headers and for marginal devices throughout most of the Islamic world.

The basic *naskh* style of script was developed further into a number of other forms; each with their own regional characteristic. The main types were *thuluth*, *muhaqqaq*, *tawqi*, *rayhani* and *riqa*. The scripts of North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Muslim Spain (*maghribi*, *sudani*, *sahrawi* and *andalusi*) differed quite notably in their character, especially in their use of multiple colours and their deep and curved loops below the baseline. In India, during the Mughal period, a distinctive script known as *bihari* was developed, whereas in China, a variant known as *sini* script was being used. From these, many other variants have developed over the centuries such as, *nast'aliq*, *shikaste*, *diwani*, *ta'liq*, *ijaze* and *jawi*.

The following section of the book shows how the words of the Qur'an have not changed over time regardless of the century in which the manuscripts were written. We have endeavoured to show example manuscripts, some only consisting of a leaf or a fragment and others a complete Qur'an, from every century of Islam to the present day. A corresponding page from a standard modern printed Qur'an has been given alongside each manuscript for the purposes of comparison. Although some of the historical manuscripts are written in the *warsh* mode of recitation, the modern printed copy is *hafs* throughout. A translation of the meaning has also been provided for the relevant verses, although space has not allowed for complete pages to be translated in every case. Furthermore, there are a number of maps in between the sections that depict the spread of Islam as well as showing the origins of some of the manuscripts.



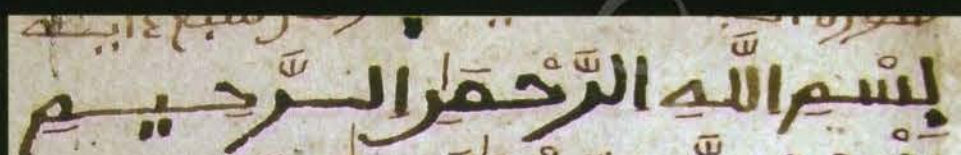
Rayhani, Persia, 16th century.



Bihari, India, 16th century.



Naskh, Persia, 17th century.



Hausawi, Saharan Africa, 18th century.



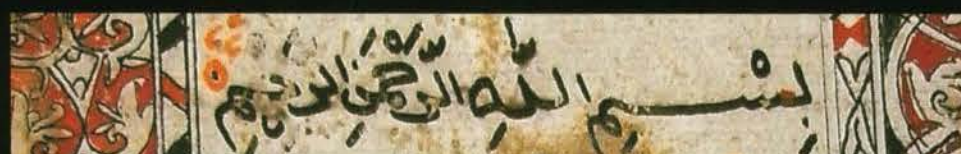
Sahrawi, African Horn, 18th century.



Sudani, African Horn, 18th century.



Sini, China, 18th century.



Jawi, Indonesia, 18th century.



Naskh, Ottoman, 19th century.



Diwani, Ottoman, 19th century.



Kufic, Hijaz, 7th century.



Kufic, Hijaz, 7th century.



Ma'il, Hijaz, 8th century.



Eastern kufic, Iraq, 11th century.



Archaic naskh, 11th century, Iraq.



Muhaqqaq, Abbasid, 12th century.



Muhaqqaq, Syria, 13th century.



Ornamental kufic, Mamluk, 14th century.



Maghribi, North Africa, 14th century.



Thuluth, Mamluk, 14th century.

Qur'an manuscripts written between the 7th and 8th centuries CE.

Egypt

Jerusalem

Dumat al-Jandal

River Nile

Red Sea

Madinah

Makkah

Jeddah

Ta'if

Arabia

Najran

San'a

Yemen

Aden

Abyssinia

8th century CE, Hijaz (p. 285).

8th century CE, Hijaz (p. 287).

The spread of Islam



Islamic World by 632 CE. This was the year that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away.

Arabian Sea

7th century CE, Hijaz (p. 271).

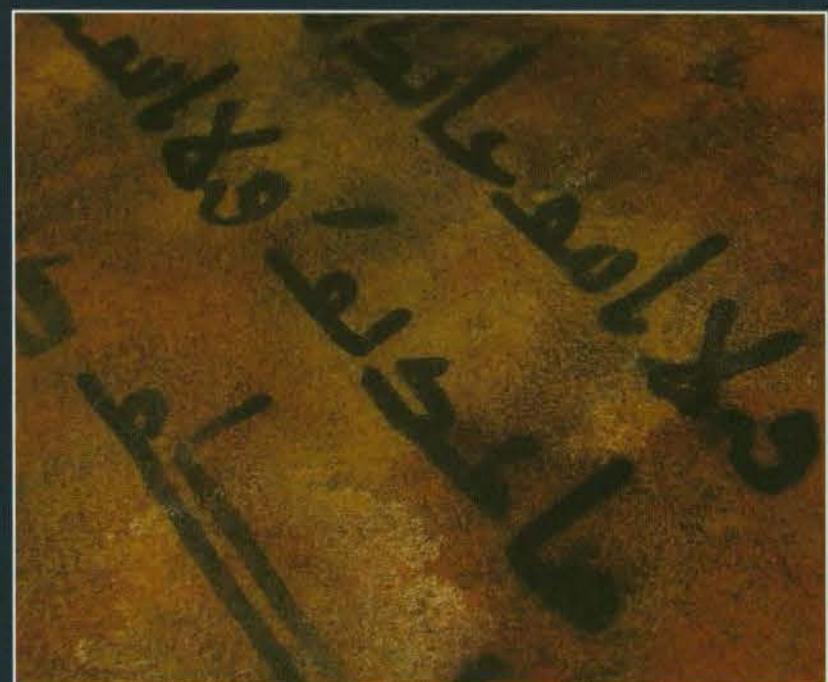
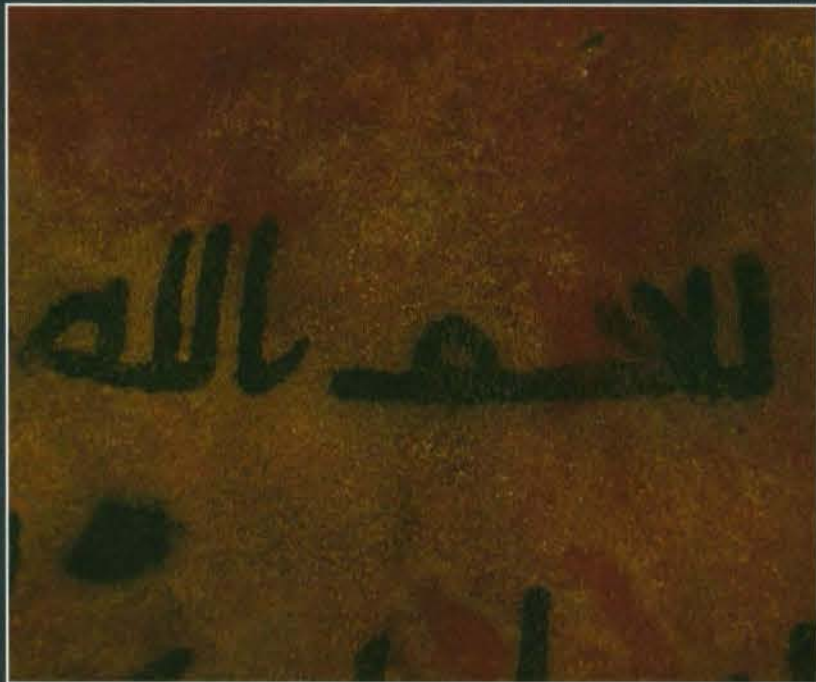
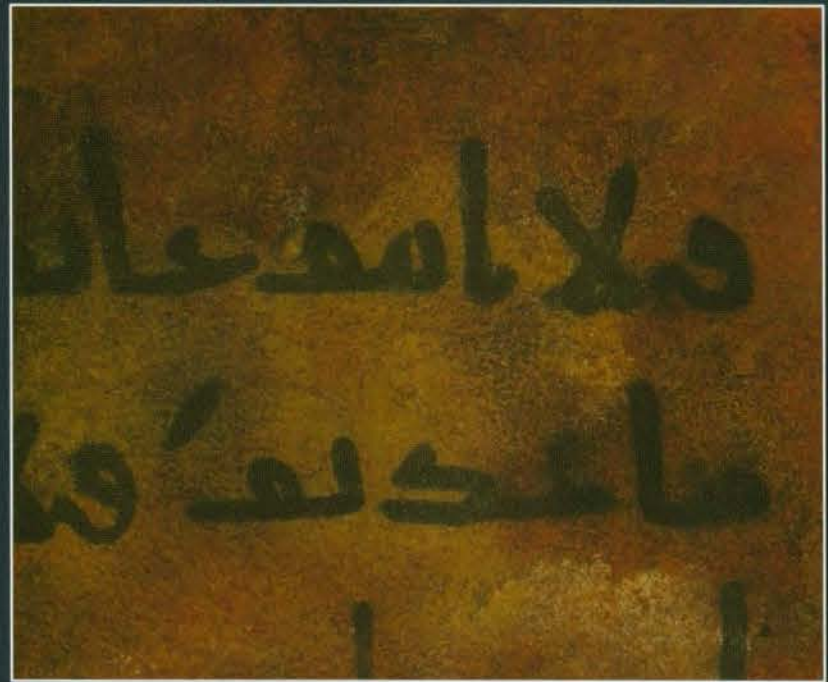
7th century CE, Hijaz (p. 273).

7th century CE, Hijaz (p. 275).

7th century CE , Hijaz (p. 277).

8th century CE , Hijaz (p. 281).

8th century CE, Hijaz (p. 283).



7TH CENTURY CE

Description: 7th century copy of an original reference Qur'an compiled by Uthman ibn Affan. Written in consonant heavy *kufic* script on vellum with minimal dotting scheme and verse markers (perhaps added at a later date).

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 222-228.

Islamic period: 1st century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, Turkey.



ءَايُنِيهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۝ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ
أَذَى فَأَعِزُّوهُنَّ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ
فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ۝
نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأَتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لَأَنفُسِكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَقَوْنَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ
عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَنَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝
لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ۝ لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ
أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝ وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝ وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ
لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكُنَّ مَخْلَقَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَبَعُولُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرِدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي
عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝ الطَّلَاقُ
مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَنٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا
بِمَاءٍ أَنْتُمْ مَوْهُنٌ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا

They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: "That is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore, keep away from women during menses and go not into them till they are purified (from menses and have taken a bath)."

And when they have purified themselves, then go into them as Allah has ordained for you. Truly, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.

Your wives are a tilth for you, so go to your tilth, when or how you will, and send (good deeds, or ask Allah to bestow upon you pious offspring) for your own selves beforehand. And fear Allah, and know that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give good tidings to the believers (O Muhammad ﷺ).

And make not Allah's (Name) an excuse in your oaths against your doing good and acting piously, and making peace among mankind. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower (i.e. do not swear much and if you have sworn against doing something good then give an expiation for the oath and do good).

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 222-224.

Description: 7th century manuscript copy of an original reference Qur'an compiled by Uthman ibn Affan. Written in consonant heavy *kufic* script on vellum with a dotting scheme and verse markers (perhaps added at a later date).

Reference: Surah Saad, 38: 43-55.

Islamic period: 1st century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, Turkey.



(Allah said to Prophet Job): "Strike the ground with your foot. This is (a spring of) water to wash in, cool and a (refreshing) drink. And We gave him (back) his family, and along with them the like thereof, as a Mercy from Us, and a Reminder for those who understand.

And take in your hand a bundle of thin grass and strike therewith (your wife), and break not your oath. Truly, We found him patient. How excellent a slave! Verily, he was ever oft-returning in repentance (to Us)!

And remember Our slaves, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, (all) owners of strength (in worshipping Us) and (also) of religious understanding. Verily, We did choose them by granting them the remembrance of the Home (in the Hereafter)

And they are with Us, verily, of the chosen and the best! And remember Ishmael, Elisha, and Isaiah, all are among the best. This is a Reminder. And verily, for the pious is a good final return (Paradise), – 'Adn (Eden) Paradise (everlasting Gardens), whose doors will be opened for them."

Surah Saad 38: 42-50.

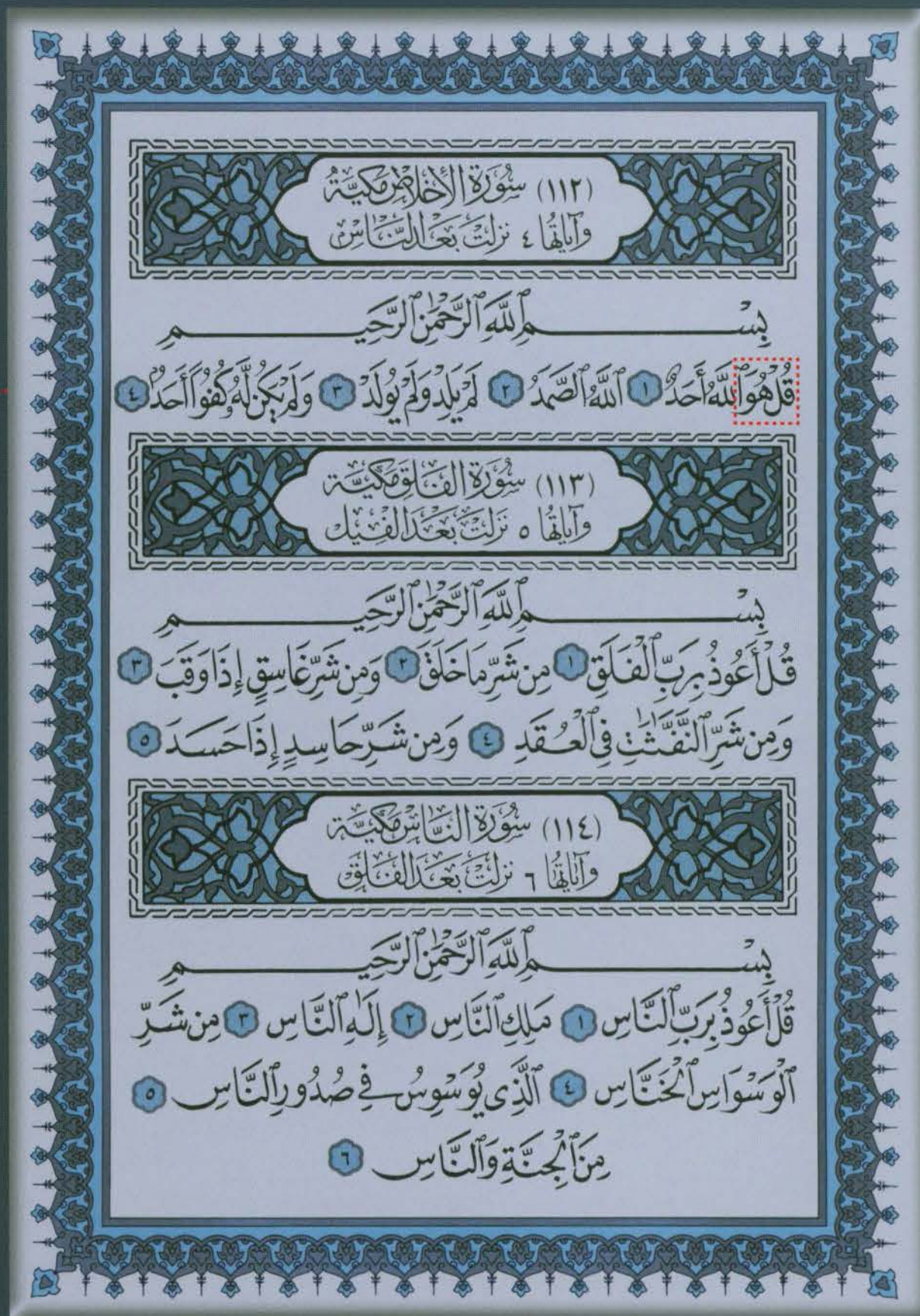
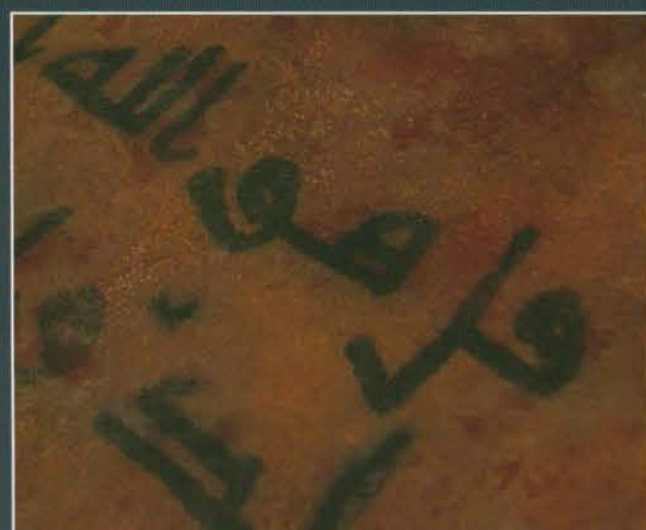
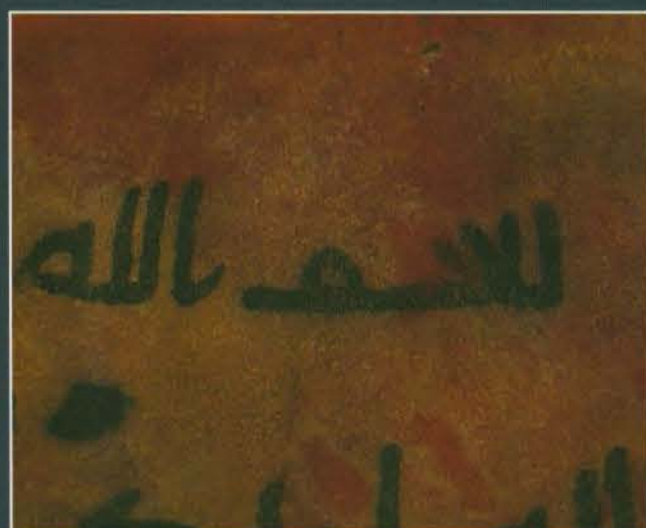
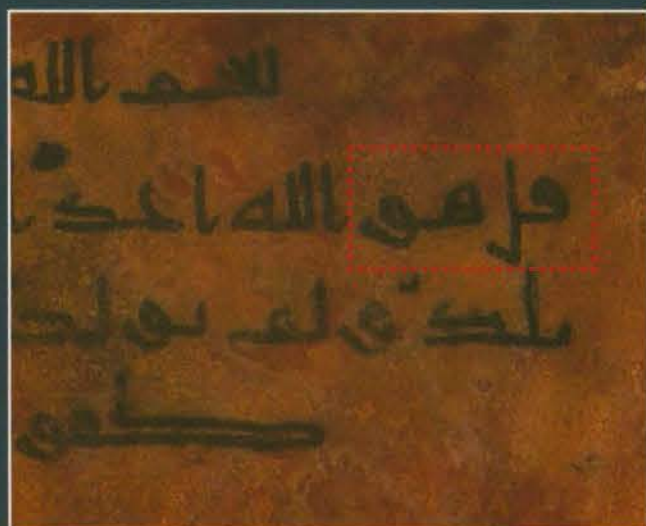
Description: an example of a rare Qur'anic leaf handwritten in a hybrid kufic-hijazi script on leather parchment. The leaf has no diacritical marks or dots which is characteristic of early kufic script.

Reference: Surah's al-Iklaas, 112; al-Falaq, 113 and al-Naas, 114.

Islamic period: 1st century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "He is Allah, (the) One.

Allah-us-Samad [Allah – the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)].

He begets not, nor was He begotten.

And there is none coequal or comparable to Him."

Surah al-Ikhaas (The Purity) 112.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of the daybreak, From the evil of what He has created,
And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away),
And from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots,
And from the evil of the envier when he envies."

Surah al-Falaq (The Daybreak) 113.

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
 قل اعوذ برب الفلق من سوء ما خلق
 ومن سوء عاقبه اذا دبر ومن
 سوء البقاع في العمق ومن
 سوء حاسد اذا حسد

الحمد لله الوهاب الوهاب
 على عباده من عباده
 على عباده من عباده
 على عباده من عباده
 على عباده من عباده

A 1300 year old Qur'anic manuscript written in hybrid *kufic-hijazi* script on leather parchment.

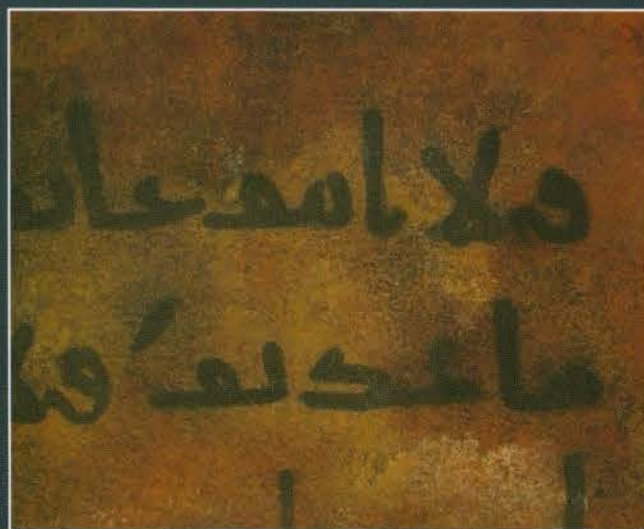
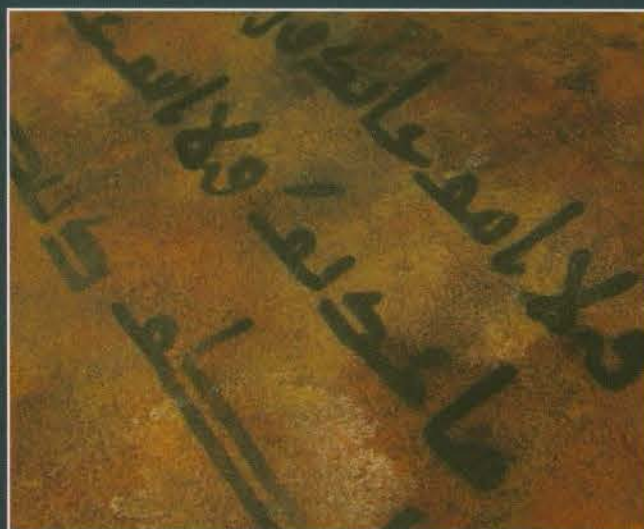
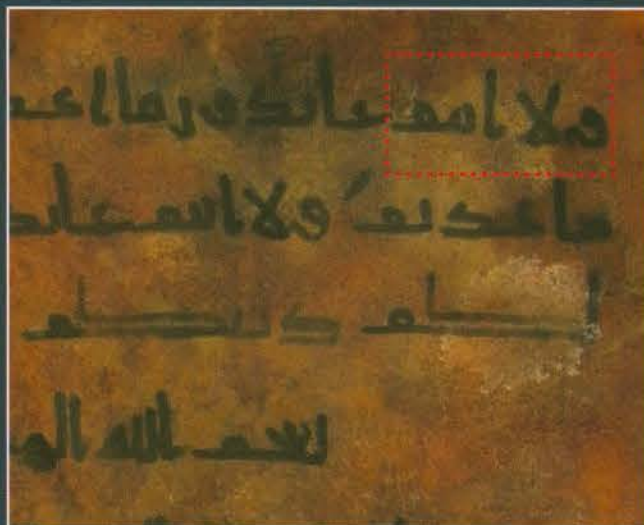
Description: Qur'an leaf in a hybrid kufic-hijazi script written on vellum. The page is an unusually large and well preserved example of some of the earliest Arabic writing. The page is slightly wrinkled due to the affects of damp.

Reference: Surah's al-Kafiroon, 109 (from verse 3), an-Nasr, 110 and al-Masad, 111.

Islamic period: 1st century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

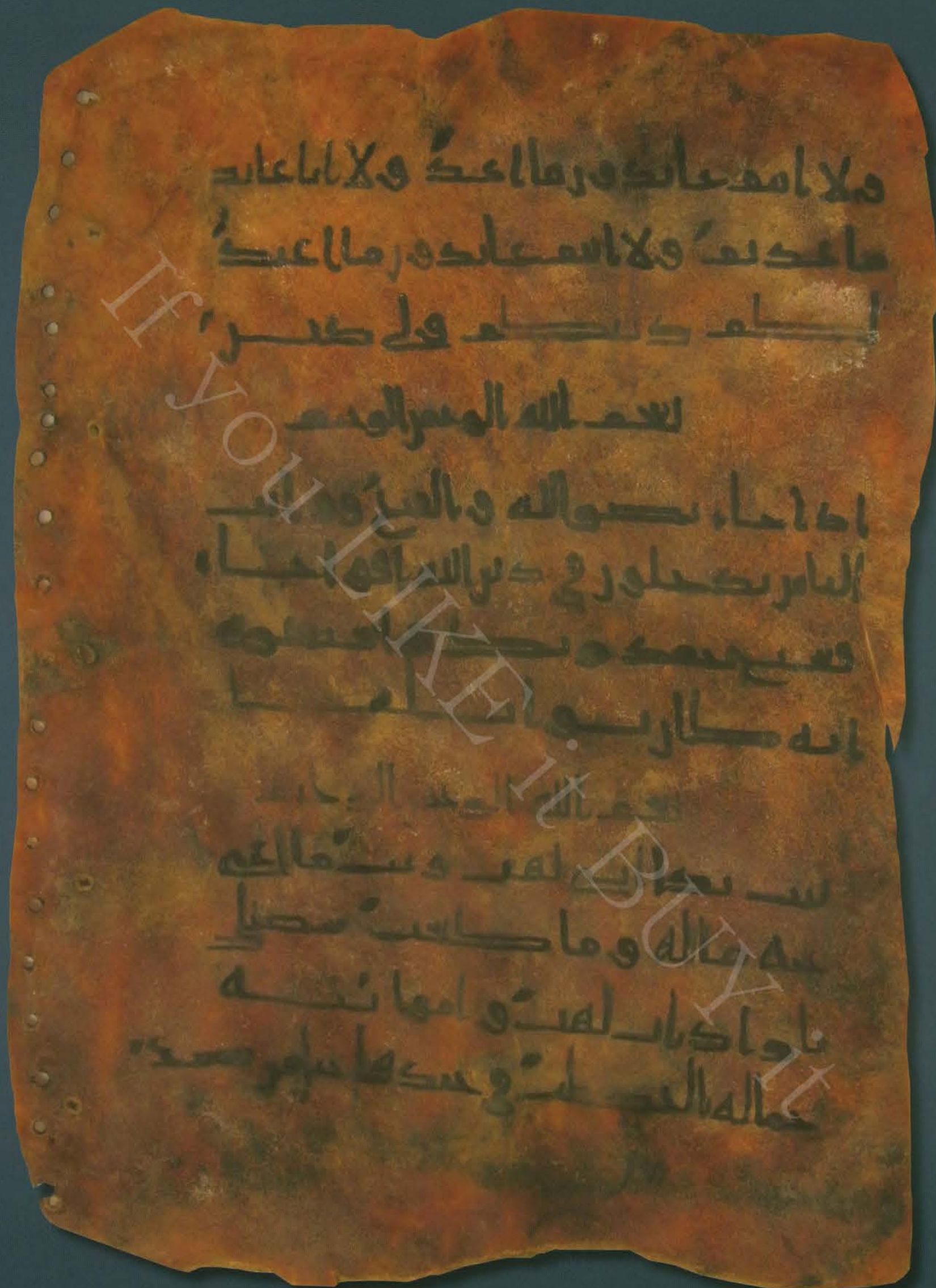
Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "O al-Kafirun (disbelievers in Allah, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar)!

I worship not that which you worship,
Nor will you worship that which I worship.

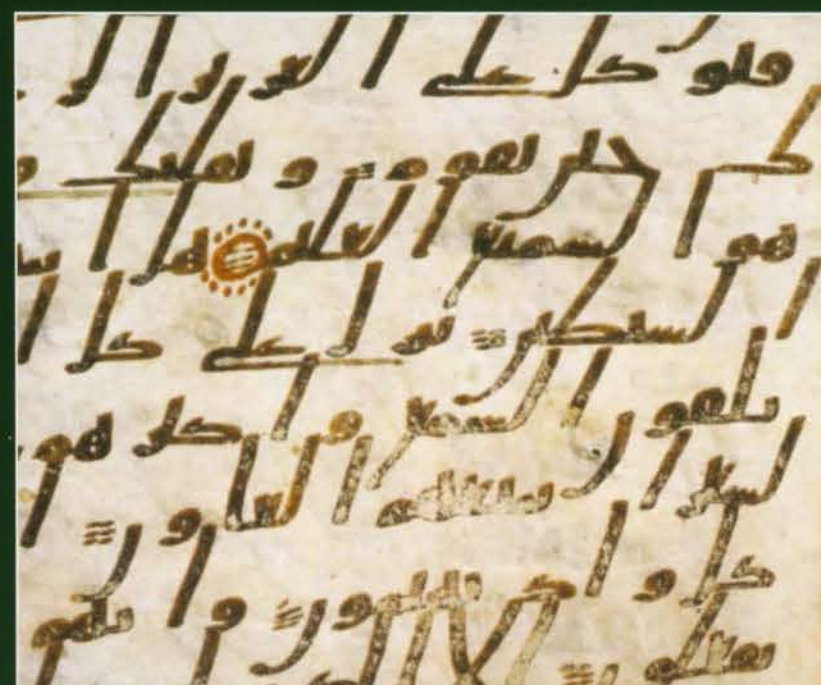
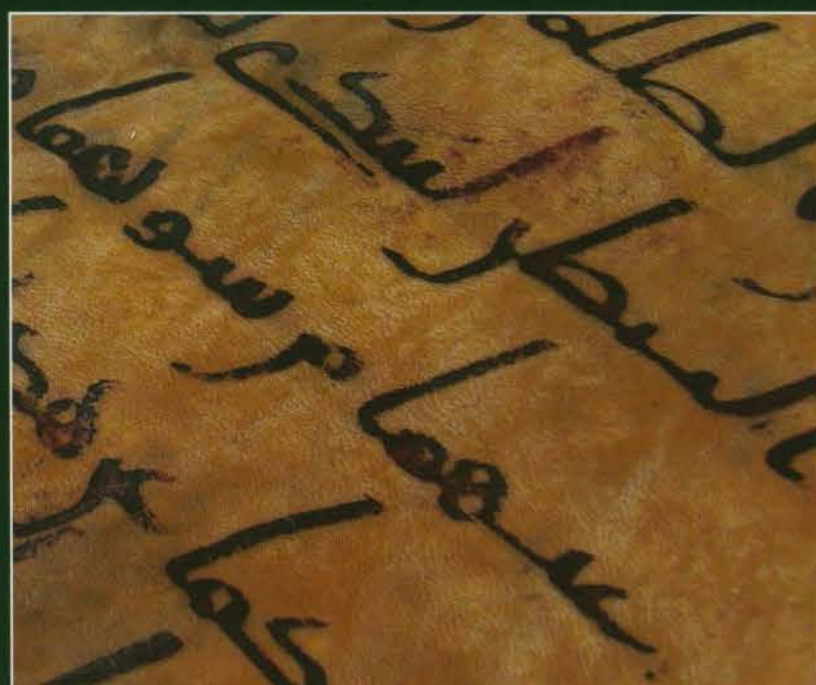
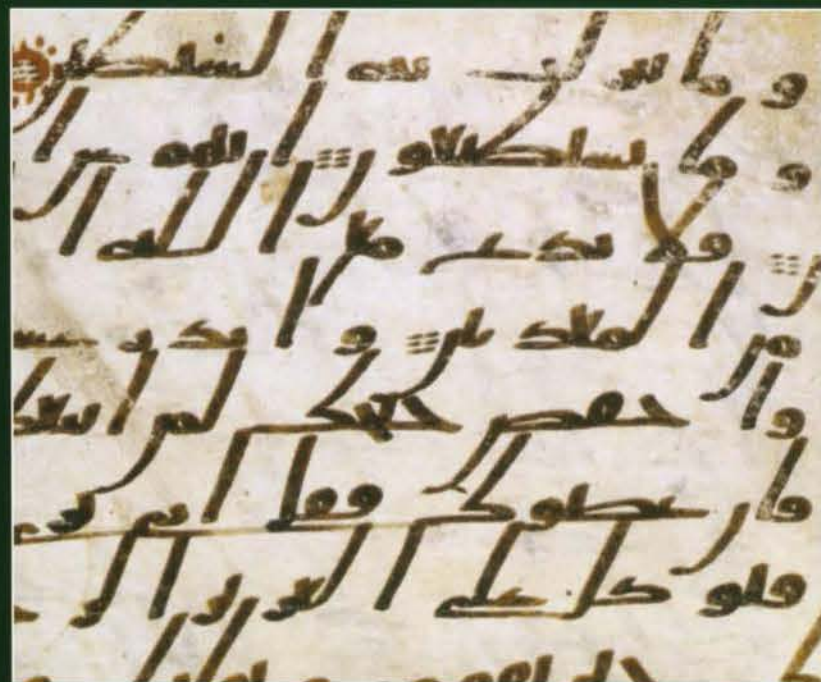
And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping.
Nor will you worship that which I worship.

To you be your religion, and to me my religion
(Islamic Monotheism)."

Surah al-Kafiroon (The Disbelievers) 109.



A 1300 year old Qur'anic manuscript written in hybrid *kufic-hijazi* script on leather parchment.



8TH CENTURY CE

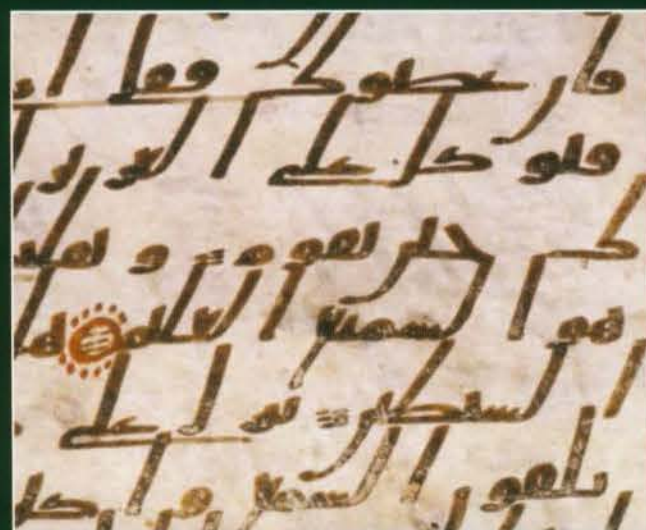
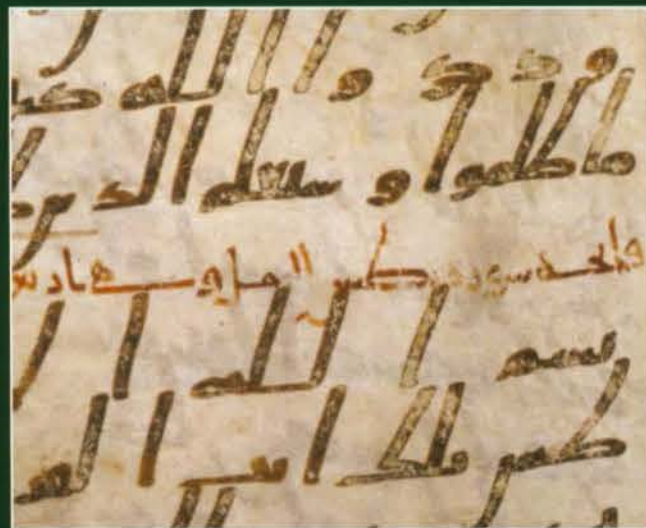
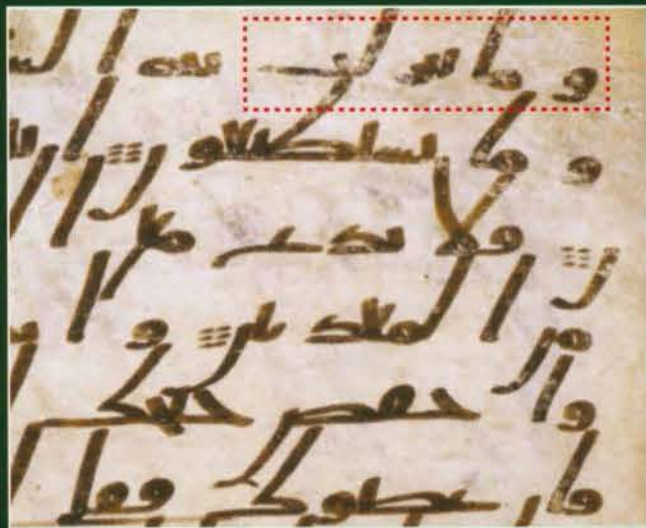
Description: a page from the British Library's *ma'il* Qur'an. Penned on vellum in a slanted *hijazi* script which was a popular script in the Arabian peninsula at the time of revelation. Every tenth verse is marked by a red hollow circle surrounded by dots.

Reference: Surah as-Shu'araa, 26: verse 210 to the start of Surah an-Naml, 27.

Islamic period: 1st/2nd century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: British Library, London.



And it is not the Shayateen (devils) who have brought it (this Qur'an) down. Neither would it suit them nor can they (produce it). Verily, they have been removed far from hearing it.

So, invoke not with Allah another god lest you should be among those who receive punishment. And warn your tribe (O Muhammad ﷺ) of near kindred.

And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you. Then if they disobey you, say: "I am innocent of what you do."

And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, Who sees you (O Muhammad ﷺ) when you stand up (alone at night for Tahajjud prayers).

And your movements among those who fall prostrate (to Allah in the five compulsory congregational prayers). Verily, He, only He, is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.

Surah ash-Shu'araa (The Poets) 26: 210-220.

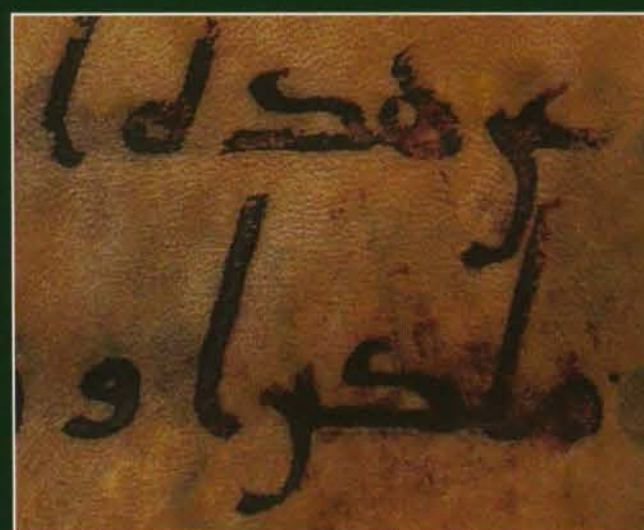
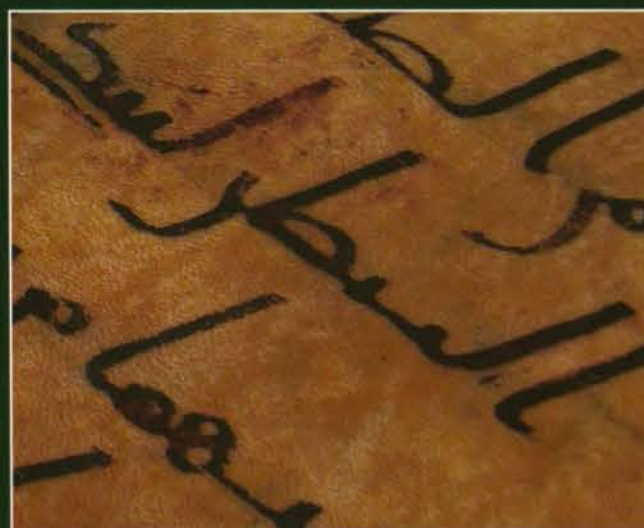
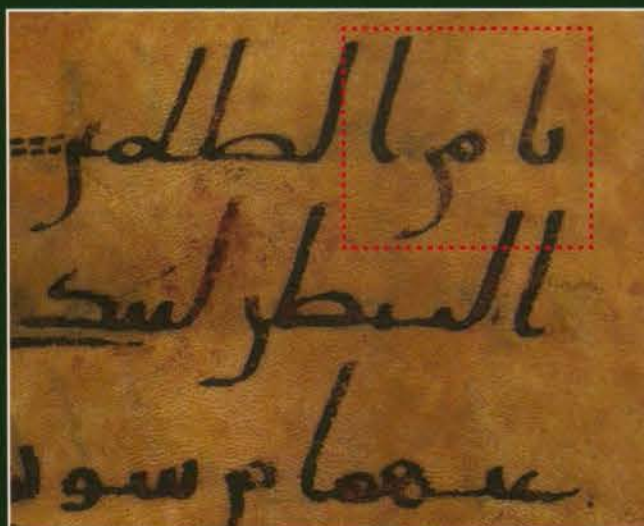
Description: Rare Qur'an manuscript written during the 8th century on vellum using *hijazi* script. The writing lacks vowel markings or the dots that distinguish certain letters. The end of verse 19 is indicated by six dashes.

Reference: Surah al-A'raaf, 7: last two words of verse 19 to the end of verse 20.

Islamic period: 1st/2nd century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



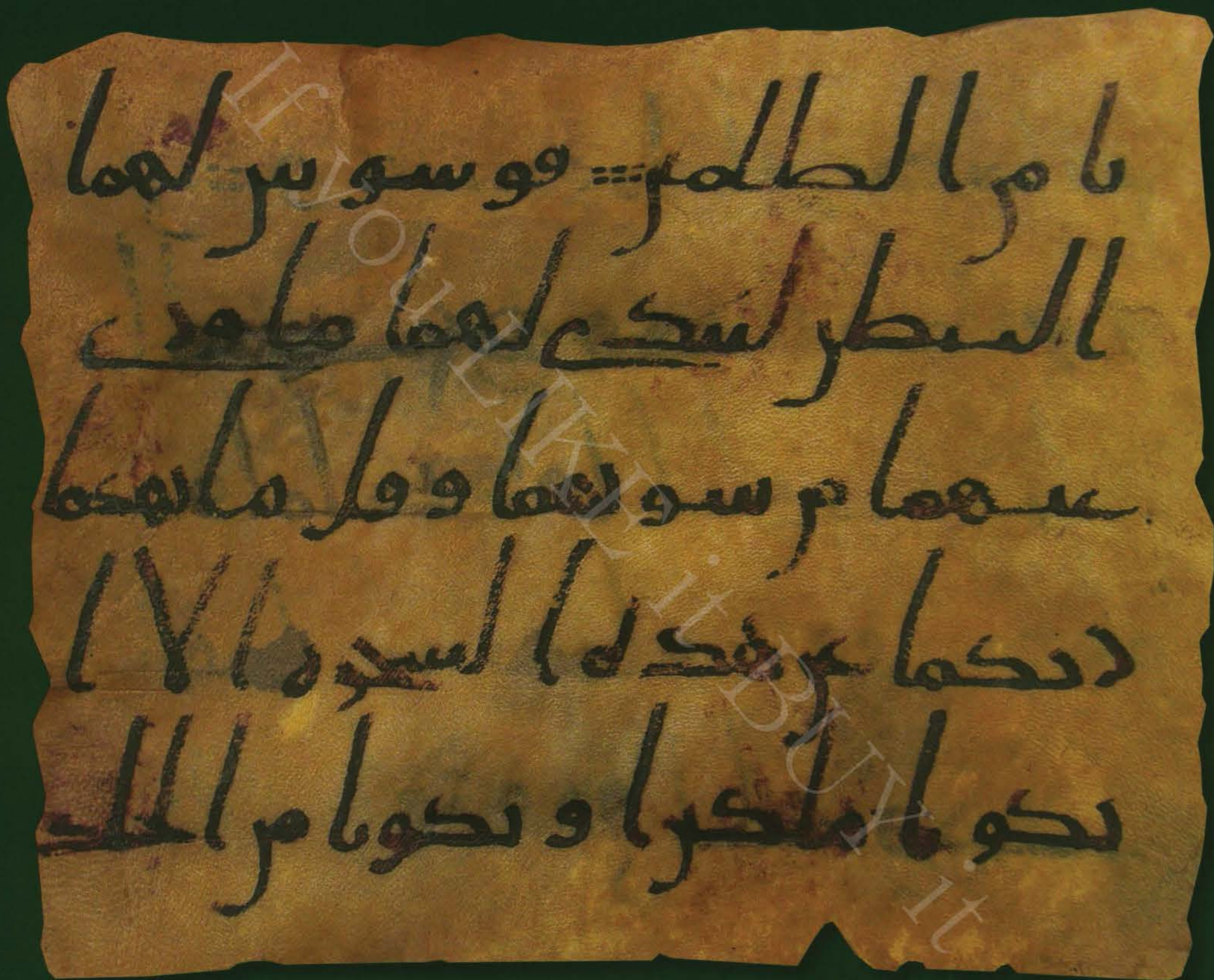
And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat thereof as you both wish, but approach not this tree otherwise you both will be of the Zalimun (unjust and wrong doers).

Then Shaitan (Satan) whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts (before); he said: "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you should become angels or become of the immortals."

And he [Shaitan (Satan)] swore by Allah to them both (saying): "Verily, I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both."

So he misled them with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame (private parts) became manifest to them and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise (in order to cover their shame). And their Lord called out to them (saying): "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you: verily, Shaitan (Satan) is an open enemy to you?"

Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights) 7: 19-22.



Qur'anic leaf written in a slanted *hijazi* script on vellum.

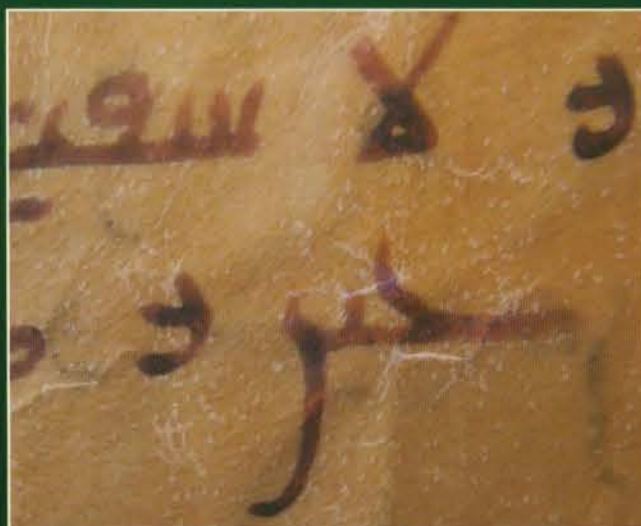
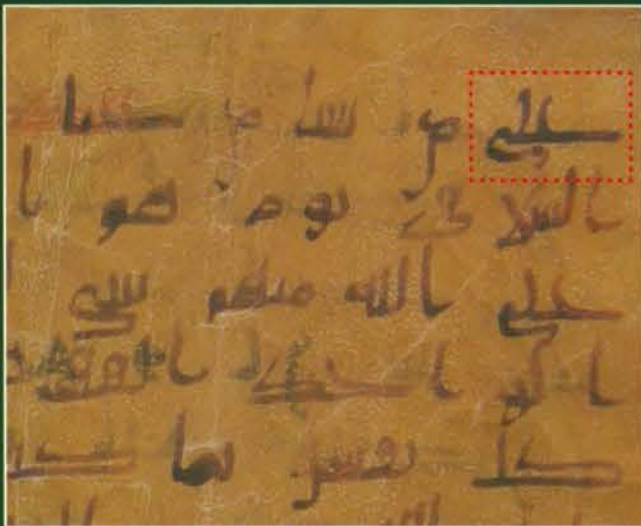
Description: Vellum Qur'an page written in consonant heavy *kufic* script from the Hijaz region of the Arabian peninsula. The text lacks vowel markings, dotting scheme and verse separators.

Reference: Surah Ghaafir, 40: from part of verse 15 to verse 19.

Islamic period: 1st/2nd century AH.

Origin: Hijaz region, Arabia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



(He is Allah) Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the Revelation by His Command to any of His slaves He wills, that he (the person who receives Revelation) may warn (men) of the Day of Mutual Meeting (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).

The Day when they will (all) come out, nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. Whose is the kingdom this Day? (Allah Himself will reply to His Question:) It is Allah's, – the One, the Irresistible! This Day shall every person be recompensed for what he earned. This Day no injustice (shall be done to anybody). Truly, Allah is Swift in reckoning.

And warn them (O Muhammad ﷺ) of the Day that is drawing near (i.e. the Day of Resurrection), when the hearts will be choking the throats, and they can neither return them (hearts) to their chests nor can they throw them out. There will be no friend, nor an intercessor for the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers), who could be given heed to. Allah knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.

Surah Ghaafir (The Forgiver) 40: 15-19.

على من شاء من كتابك في اليوم
 السلا في يوم هو ما دون لا يحق
 على الله منكم يلى لمن الطيب في اليوم لله
 انك السلا في اليوم هو ما دون لا يحق
 كل نفس بما كسبت لا ظلم اليوم
 ان الله يفرق بين العباد و ما يشاء
 هم يوم لا اله الا الله بالقلوب
 لك في الحيا هو كل كمن ما الظلم
 من كمن و لا يفرق بينك و ما تعلم
 في الا خير و ما يحق بالصدق

Qur'anic leaf written in a *kufic* script on vellum.

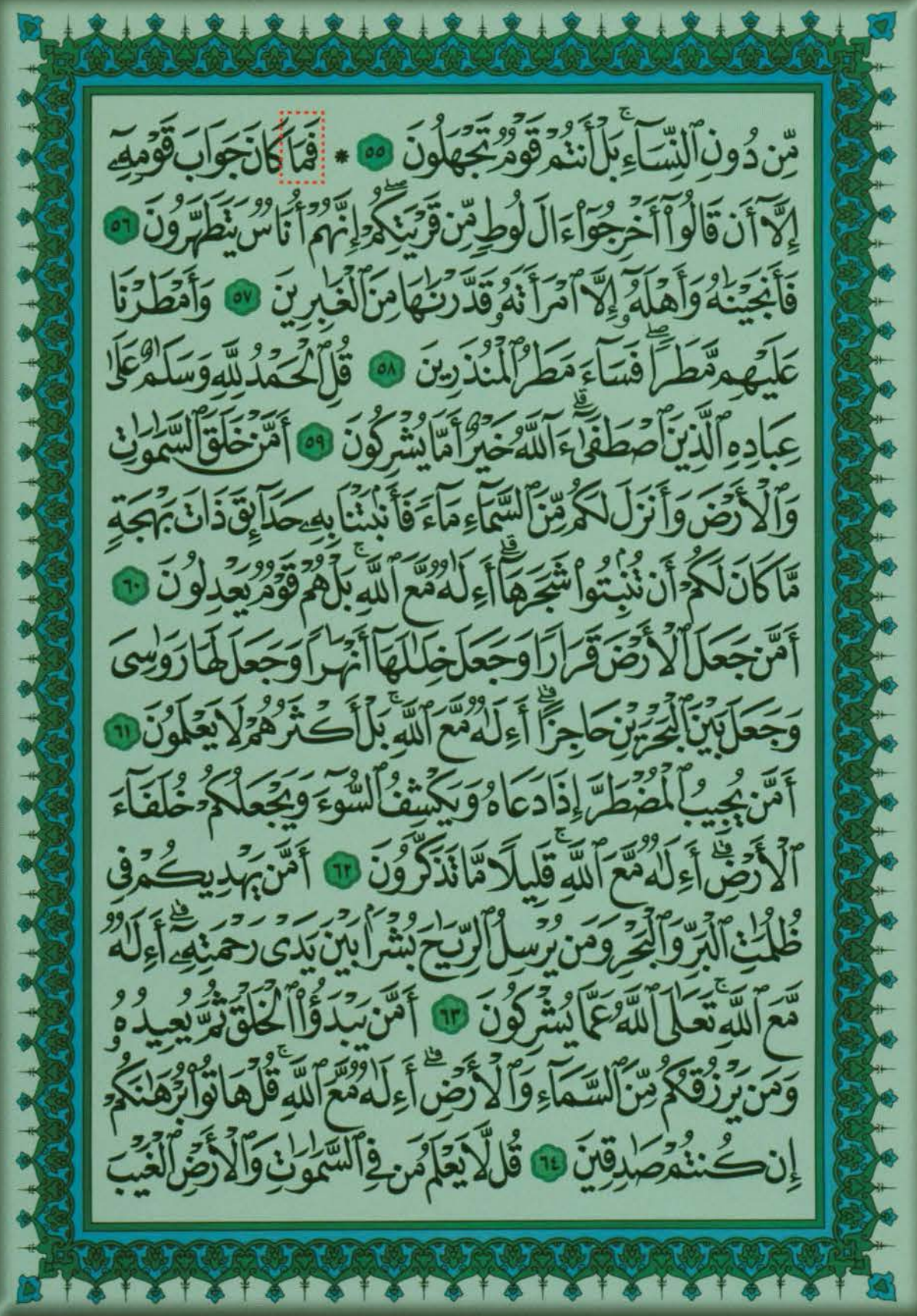
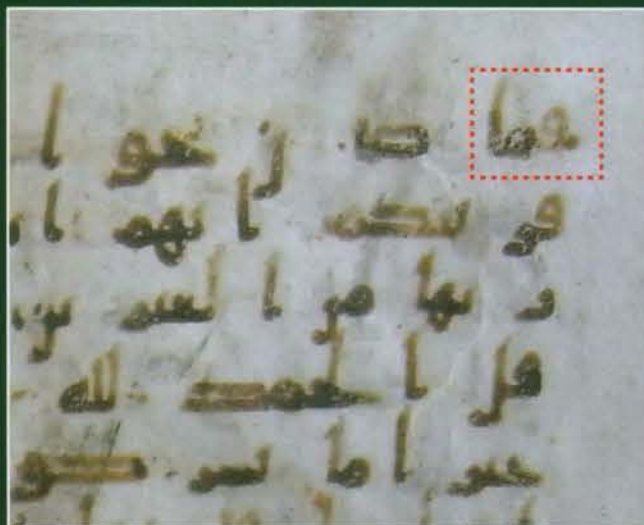
Description: Small kufic manuscript with some letter-forms similar to the hijazi script styles. This, along with the imperfect lineal discipline and the use of dots for verse markers, indicates an early origin, possibly during the later Umayyad period.

Reference: Surah an-Naml, 27: verse 56 to middle of verse 67 on the word *kunnaa*.

Islamic period: 2nd century AH.

Origin: North Africa.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



There was no other answer given by his people except that they said: "Drive out the family of Lot from your city. Verily, these are men who want to be clean and pure!" So, We saved him and his family, except his wife. We destined her to be of those who remained behind. And We rained down on them a hail (of stones). So, evil was the rain of those who were warned. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "All praise and thanks are Allah's, and peace be on His slaves whom He has chosen (for His Message)! Is Allah better, or (all) that they ascribe as partners (to Him)?" (Of course, Allah is Better).

Is not He (better than your gods) Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water (rain) from the sky, whereby We cause to grow wonderful gardens full of beauty and delight? It is not in your ability to cause the growth of their trees. Is there any god with Allah? Nay, but they are a people who ascribe equals (to Him)! Is not He (better than your gods) Who has made the earth as a fixed abode, and has placed rivers in its midst, and has placed firm mountains therein, and has set a barrier between the two seas (of salt and sweet water)? Is there any god with Allah? Nay, but most of them know not!

Surah an-Naml (The Ants) 27: 56-61.

[illegible]

Folio from a Qur'an manuscript on parchment with 17 lines of *kufic* script in brown ink, no original letter-pointing, occasional later additions of letter-pointing in a grey ink and no vocalisation.

Qur'an manuscripts written between the 9th and 12th centuries CE.

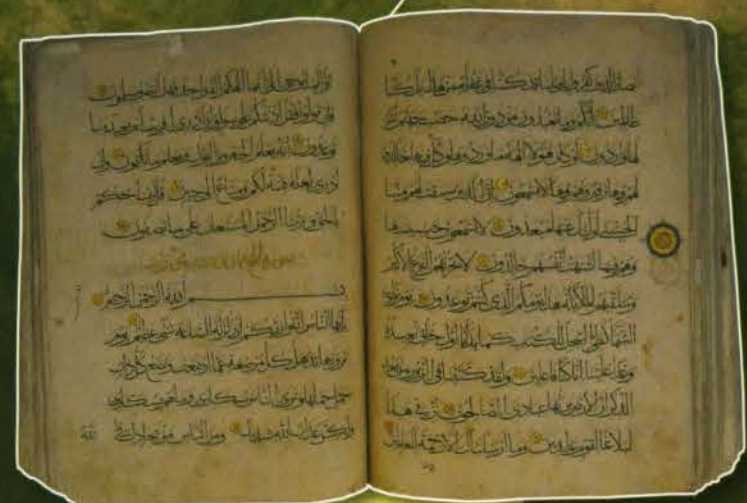


The Spread of Islam

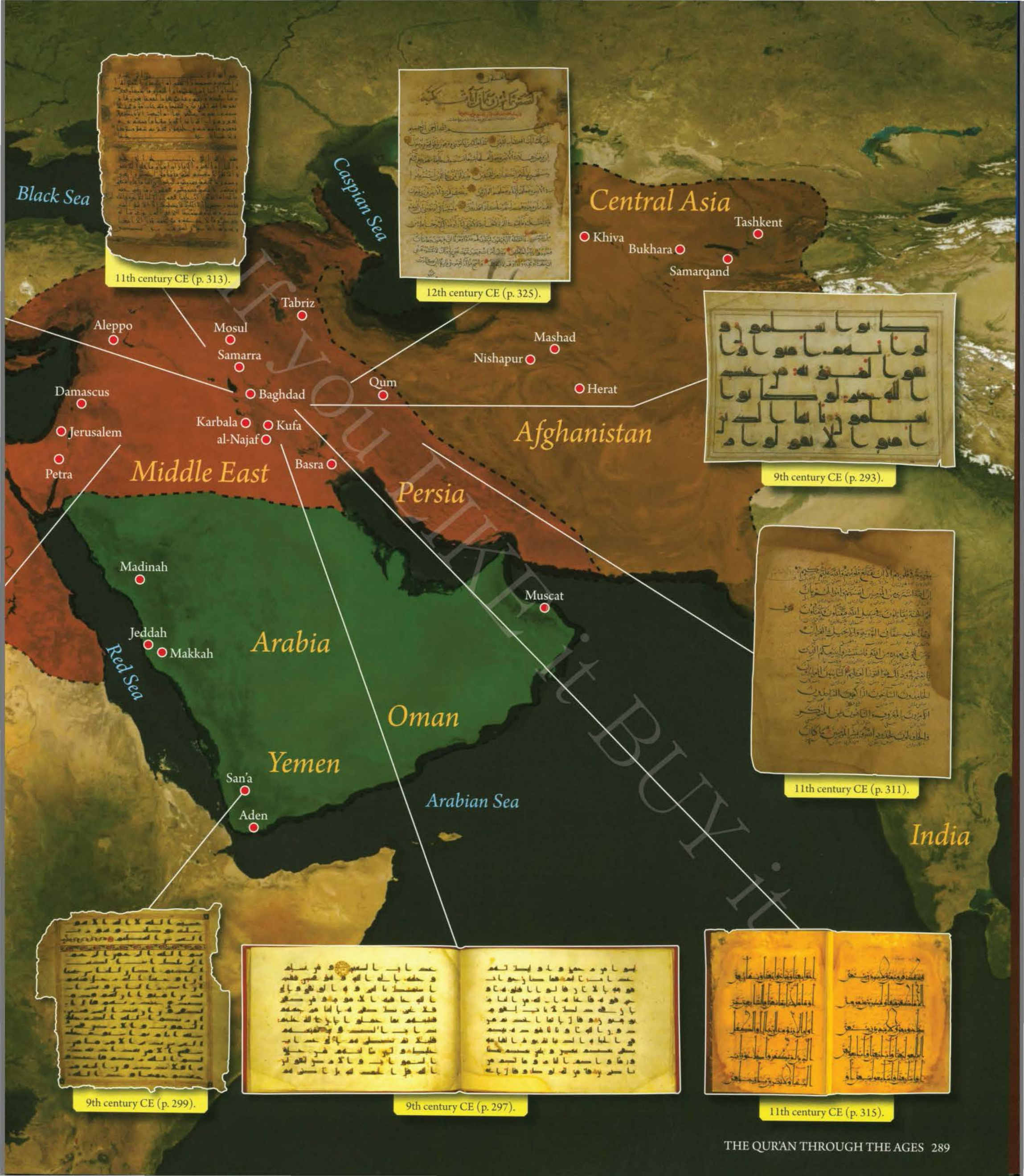
- Islamic World by 632 CE. This was the year that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away.
- Islamic World by 661 CE, at the end of the period of the first four Rightly Guided Caliphs of Islam.
- Islamic World by 750 CE, at the end of the Umayyad Caliphate.



10th century CE (p. 307).



12th century CE (p. 323).



Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Central Asia

Tashkent

Khiva

Bukhara

Samarqand

11th century CE (p. 313).

12th century CE (p. 325).



9th century CE (p. 293).

Afghanistan

Persia

Middle East

Arabia

Oman

Yemen

Arabian Sea

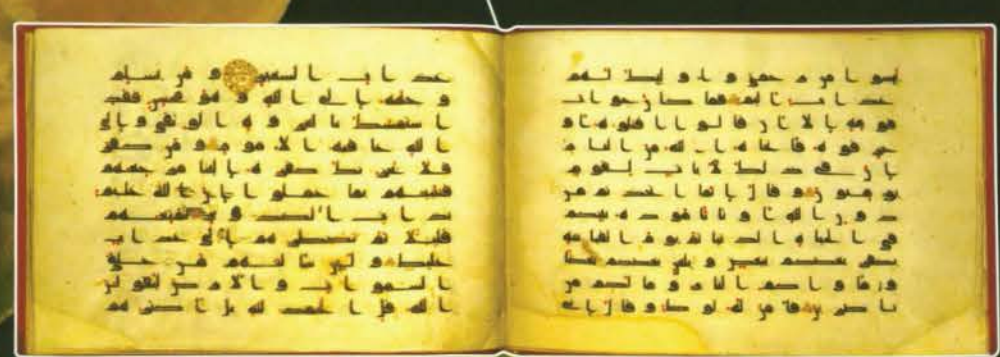
India



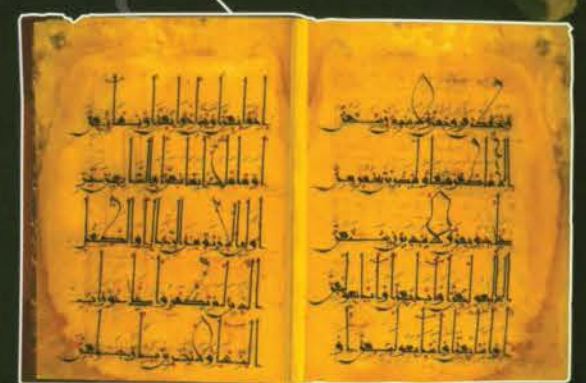
11th century CE (p. 311).



9th century CE (p. 299).



9th century CE (p. 297).



11th century CE (p. 315).



9TH CENTURY CE

Description: Traditional sharp and angular kufic script written on white vellum in black ink with minimal dotting scheme in red. Extreme close-up view (below image) shows how the ink has worn over the centuries.

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2: end of verse 102 to part of verse 104.

Islamic period: 3rd century AH.

Origin: Middle East region.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



And if they had believed and guarded themselves from evil and kept their duty to Allah, far better would have been the reward from their Lord, if they but knew!

O you who believe! Say not (to the Messenger ﷺ) Ra'ina but say Unzurna (make us understand) and listen. And for the disbelievers there is a painful torment.

Neither those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) nor Al-Mushrikun (the idolaters, polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, pagans) like that there should be sent down to you any good from your Lord. But Allah chooses for His Mercy whom He wills.

And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

Surah Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 103-105.



Over 1,000 years old, this Qur'an leaf is written in traditional sharp and angular *kufic* script on white vellum.

Description: Folio from a Qur'an manuscript on parchment with 5 lines of kufic script in gold with sepia outlines. Vocalisation in red dots, diacritics marked with green and blue dots, individual verses marked with gold rosettes circled in blue.

Reference: Surah an-Naml, 27: part of verse 13 to middle of verse 14.

Islamic period: 3rd century AH.

Origin: Tunisia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.

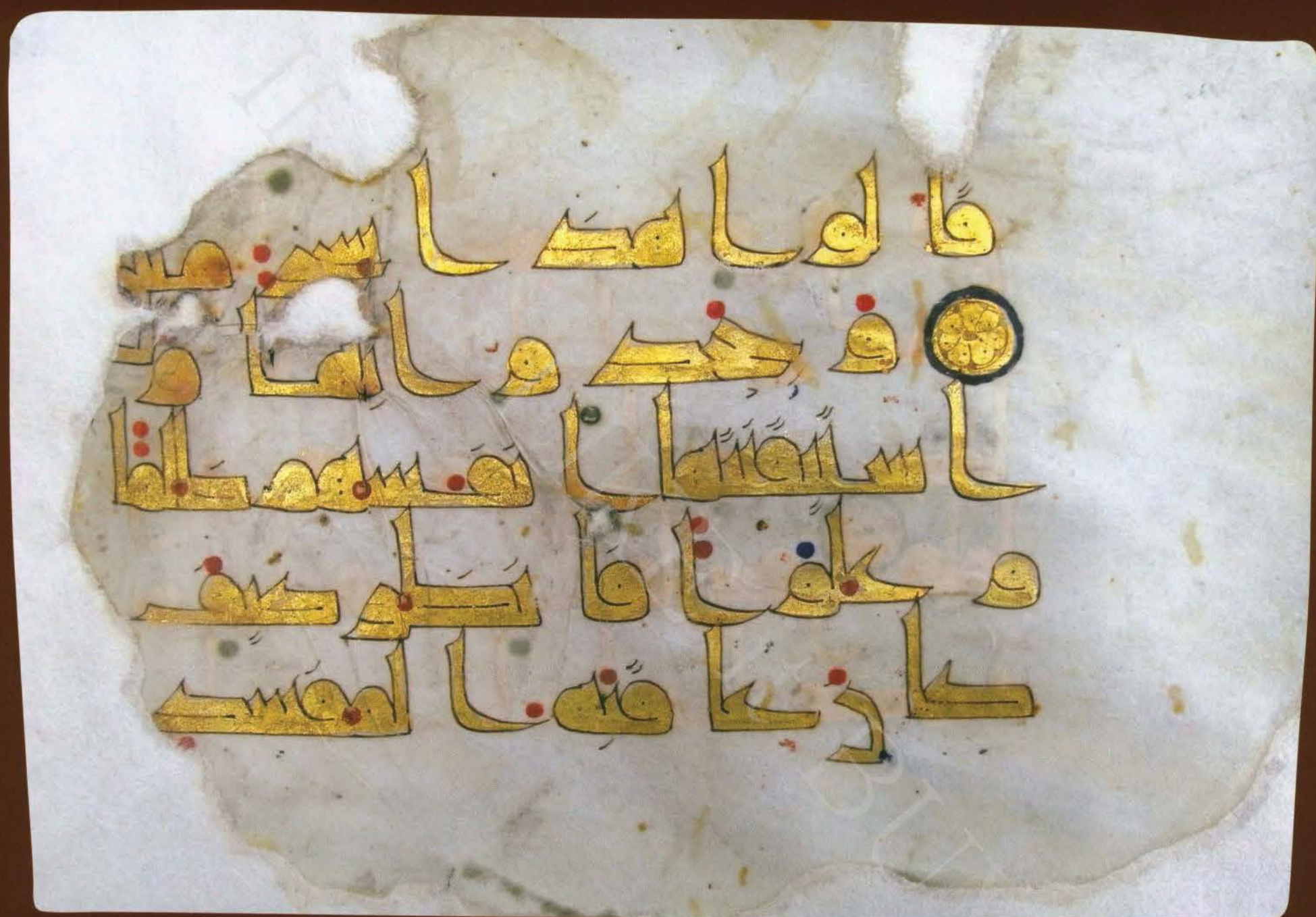


O Musa (Moses)! Verily, it is I, Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. "And throw down your stick!" But when he saw it moving as if it was a snake, he turned in flight, and did not look back. (It was said:) "O Musa (Moses)! Fear not: verily, the Messengers fear not in front of Me. Except him who has done wrong and afterwards has changed evil for good; then surely, I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

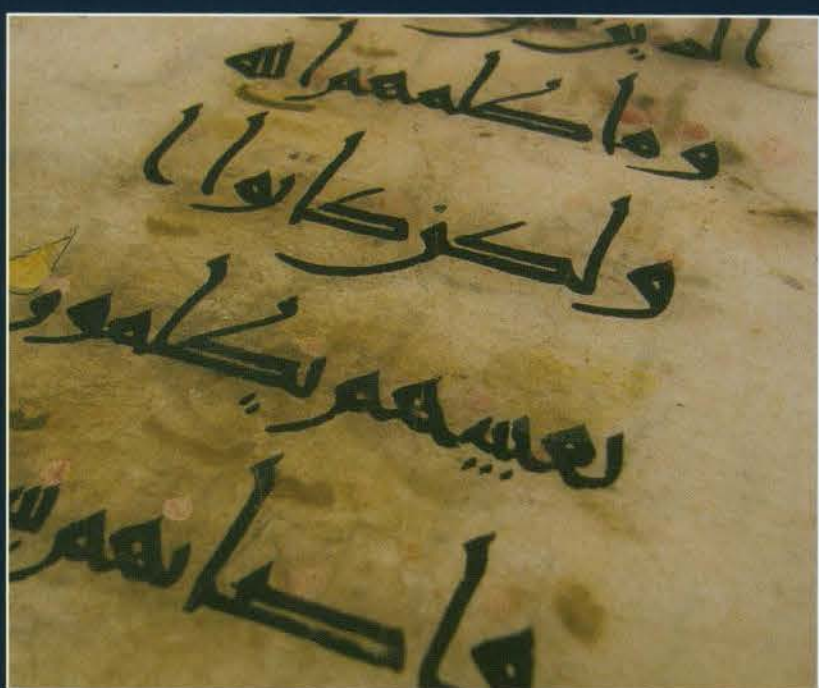
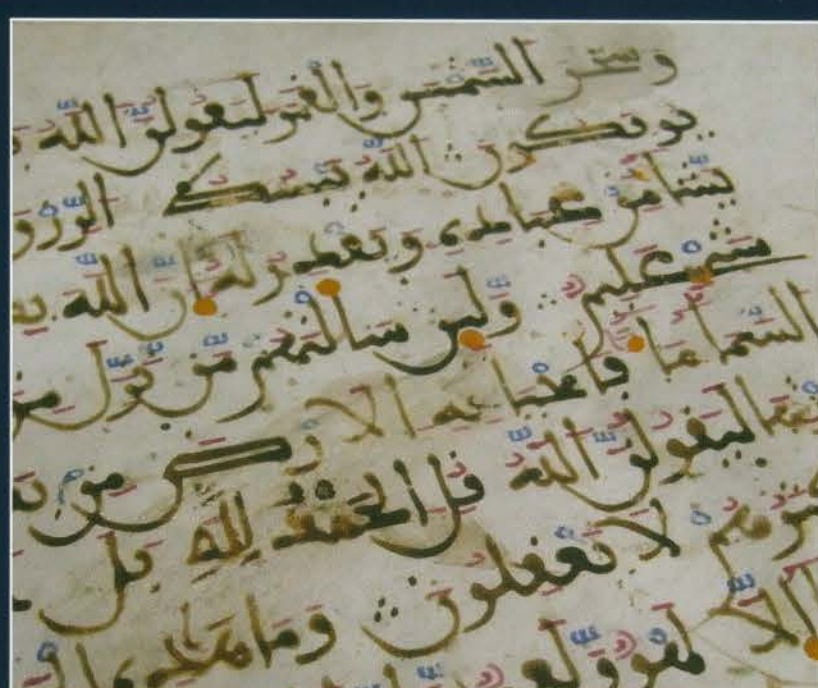
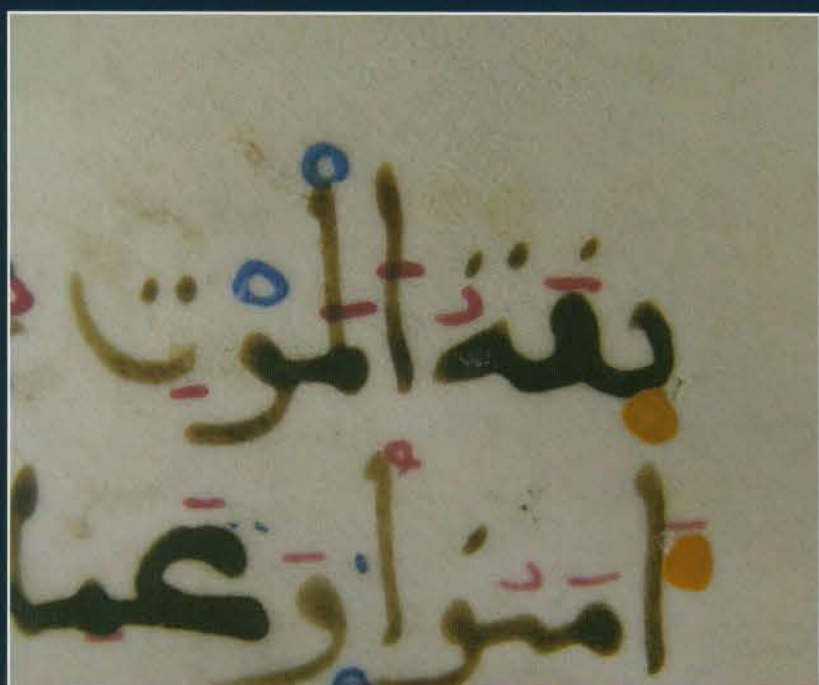
And put your hand into your bosom, it will come forth white without hurt. (These are) among the nine signs (you will take) to Pharaoh and his people. Verily, they are a people who are Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah). But when Our verses (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) came to them, clear to see, they said: "This is a manifest magic."

And they denied them (those verses) wrongfully and arrogantly, though their own selves were convinced thereof [i.e. those (verses) are from Allah, and Musa (Moses) is the Messenger of Allah in truth, but they disliked to obey Musa (Moses), and hated to believe in his Message of Monotheism]. So, see what was the end of the Mufsidun (disbelievers, evildoers, liars and disobedient to Allah).

Surah an-Naml (The Ant) 27: 9-14.



This *kufic* leaf is from a famous manuscript written entirely in gold, known to have once been housed in Kairouan, Tunisia.



10TH CENTURY CE

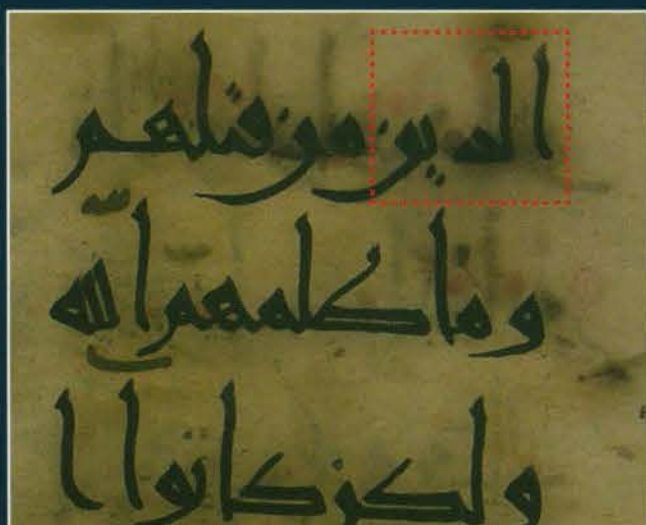
Description: Two small pages (135 x 90 mm) each containing 5 lines of black *eastern kufic* script on thick hand made buff paper. Slightly worn vocalisation of red dots and other diacritical marks are in green.

Reference: Surah an-Nahl, 16: from middle of verse 33 to start of verse 35.

Islamic period: 3rd/4th century AH.

Origin: Iraq.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



Those whose lives the angels take while they are in a pious state (i.e. pure from all evil, and worshipping none but Allah Alone) saying (to them): "Salamun 'Alaikum (peace be unto you) enter you Paradise, because of that (the good) which you used to do (in the world)."

Do they (the disbelievers and polytheists) await but that the angels should come to them (to take away their souls (at death)), or there should come the command (i.e. the torment or the Day of Resurrection) of your Lord? Thus did those before them. And Allah wronged them not, but they used to wrong themselves. Then the evil results of their deeds overtook them, and that at which they used to mock, surrounded them.

And those who joined others in worship with Allah said: "If Allah had so willed, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped aught but Him, nor would we have forbidden anything without (Command from) Him." So did those before them.

Then! Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?

Surah an-Nahl (The Bee) 16: 32-35.

مَا عَمَلُوا وَجَاءُوا
 بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا ه
 يَسْمَعُونَ وَوَقَالَ
 اللَّهُ تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى
 اللَّهِ إِنِّي مَعَهُ

الْيَوْمَ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
 وَمَا كَلَّمَ هُمُ اللَّهُ
 وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَه
 لِيَعْلَمُوا بِكَلَمِ اللَّهِ
 فَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ بَيْنِ

Qur'an leaves with black *eastern kufic* script written on thick hand made paper.

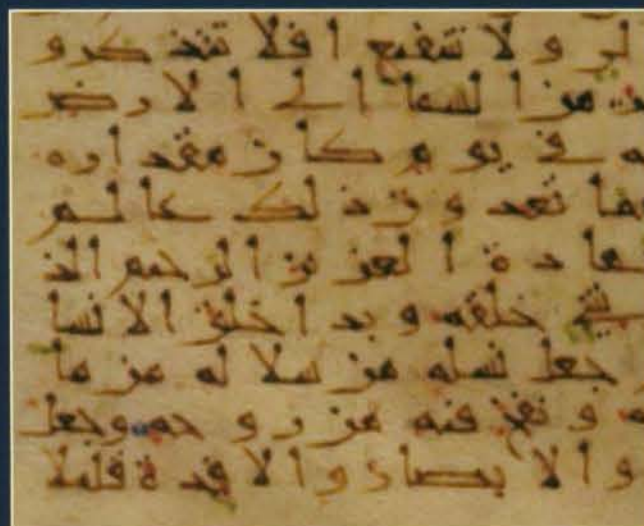
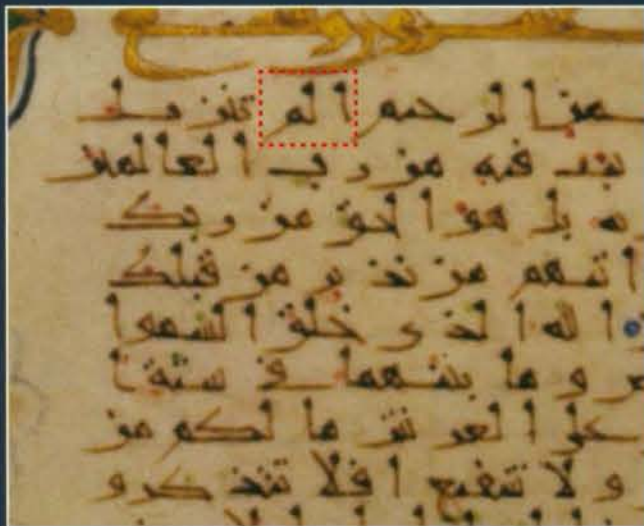
Description: A page from a Qur'an written in eastern kufic with use of different colours for the vowels. Markings within the text and margin indicate Qur'anic divisions and verse endings.

Reference: End of Surah Luqmaan, 31 and the start of Surah as-Sajdah, 32: verse 1 to part of verse 9.

Islamic period: 4th century AH.

Origin: Egypt.

Location: British Library, London.



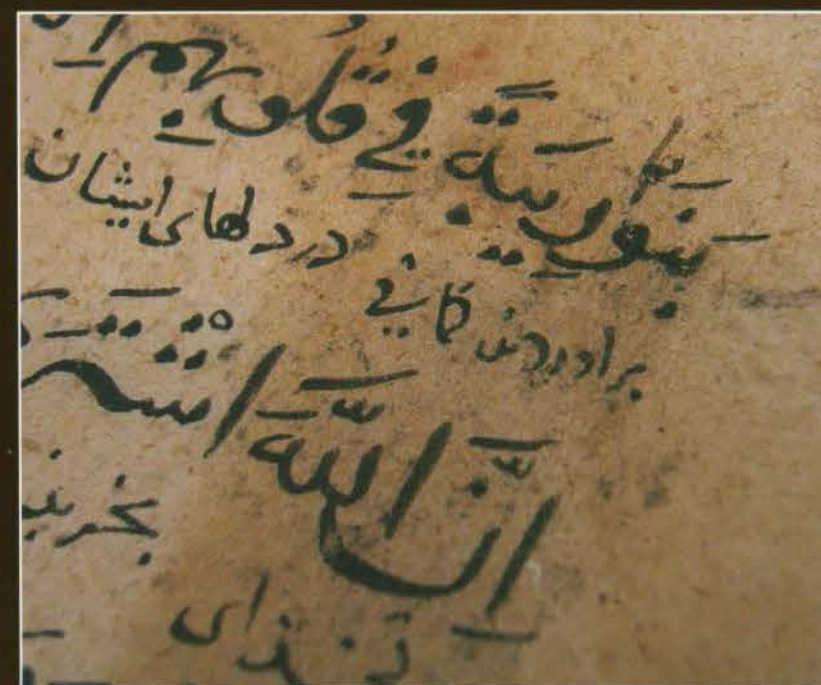
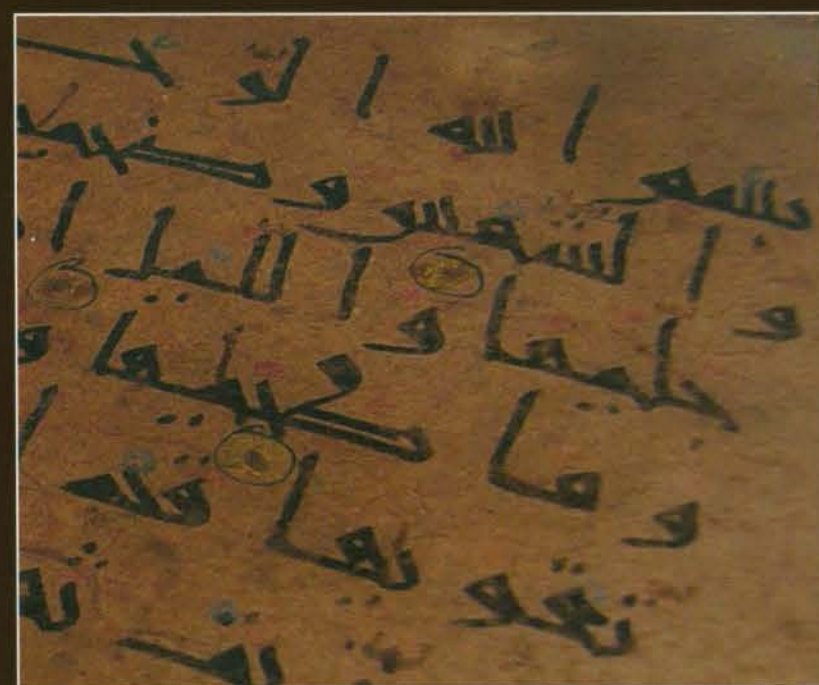
In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Alif-Lam-Mim. The revelation of the Book (this Qur'an) in which there is no doubt, is from the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)! Or say they: "He (Muhammad ﷺ) has fabricated it?" Nay, it is the truth from your Lord, so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you (O Muhammad ﷺ), in order that they may be guided.

Allah is He Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in six Days. Then He rose over (Istawa) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty). You (mankind) have none, besides Him, as a Wali (protector or helper) or an intercessor. Will you not then remember (or receive admonition)?

He manages and regulates (every) affair from the heavens to the earth; then it (affair) will go up to Him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning (i.e. reckoning of our present world's time). That is He, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful.

Surah as-Sajdah (The Prostration) 32: 1-6.



11TH CENTURY CE

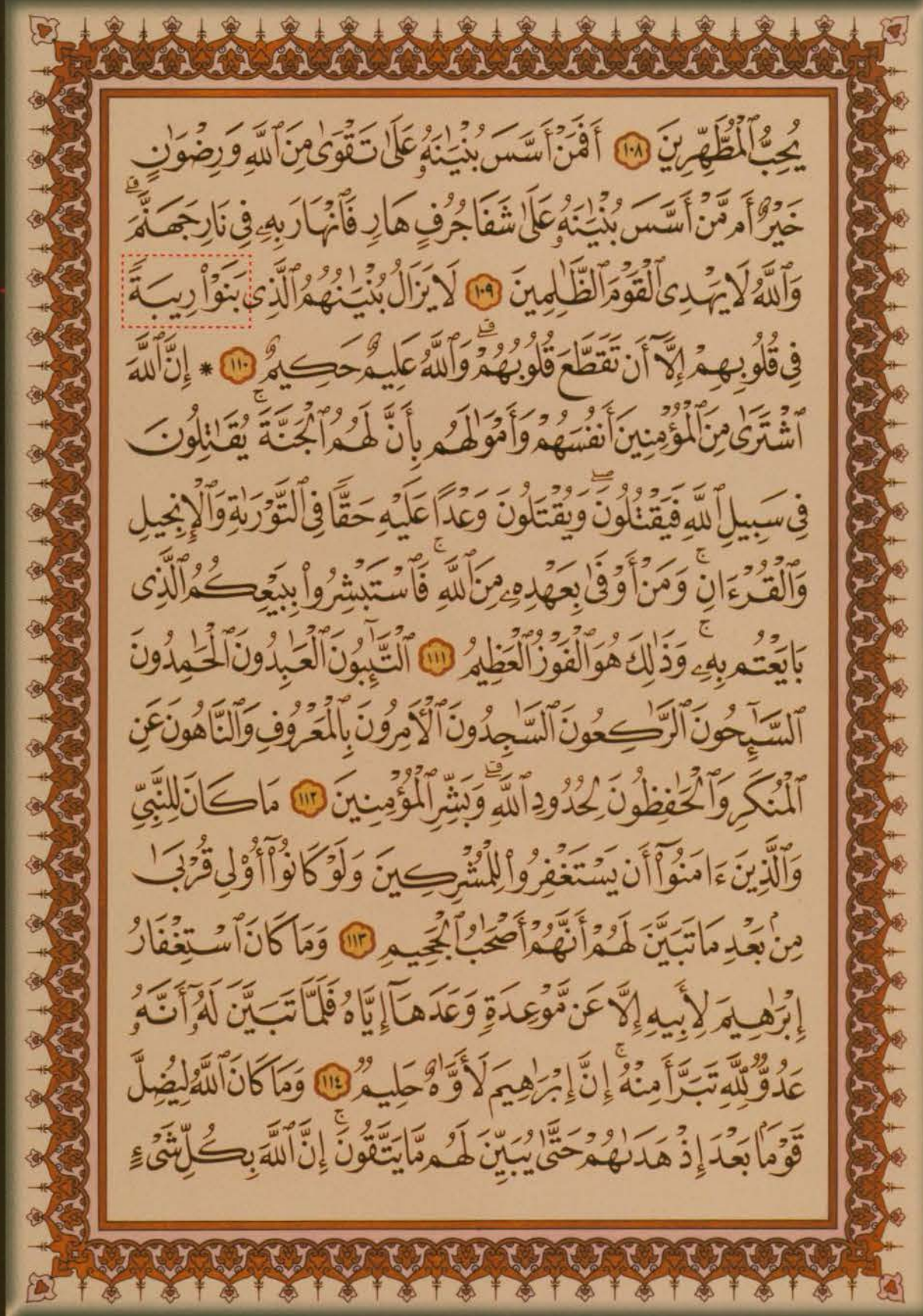
Description: Handwritten Abbasid Qur'an page written in *naskh* on coloured paper dyed with henna. The leaf also has small interlinear Persian/Farsi translation in *nasta'liq* script.

Reference: Surah at-Tawbah, 9: part of verse 110 to the start of verse 113.

Islamic period: 4/5 century AH.

Origin: Persia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



The building which they built will never cease to be a cause of hypocrisy and doubt in their hearts unless their hearts are cut to pieces (i.e. till they die). And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties for (the price) that theirs shall be Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill (others) and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. That is the supreme success.

(The believers whose lives Allah has purchased are) those who turn to Allah in repentance (from polytheism and hypocrisy), who worship (Him), who praise (Him), who fast (or go out in Allah's Cause), who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (on people) Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by Allah (do all that Allah has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden). And give glad tidings to the believers.

Surah at-Tawbah (The Repentance) 9: 110-112.

بِنُورِيَّةٍ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ
 برادران کاین در دلهای ایشان ملامت را بهر دلهای ایشان خطای دانستند و دانستند
 أَنْ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ
 بخند از بخیرین از مومنان تنهای ایشان و خواستهای ایشان بآن
 لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ
 ایشان را در بهشت کار دارند کنند در راه خدای بکشند کافران و کافرانی ایشان را
 وَعَدَ عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ
 بر روی در راه راست در توریست و انجیل و قرآن
 وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي
 کس تمام کند پیمان خود از خدایان مزدگان بپذیرند بفروخت شما آن
 بِأَيْعَتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ الشَّاكِرُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ
 در حقش درود بفرمان و اوست آن رستن بزرگ توبه گران بپرستندگان
 الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ
 سپاس داران در راه داران رقع گران سجده گران
 الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
 فرمانبرداران بپسندیدن دادارندگان از دشمنی
 وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَا كَانَ
 نگاه داران حدها خدای و مژگان مومنان را

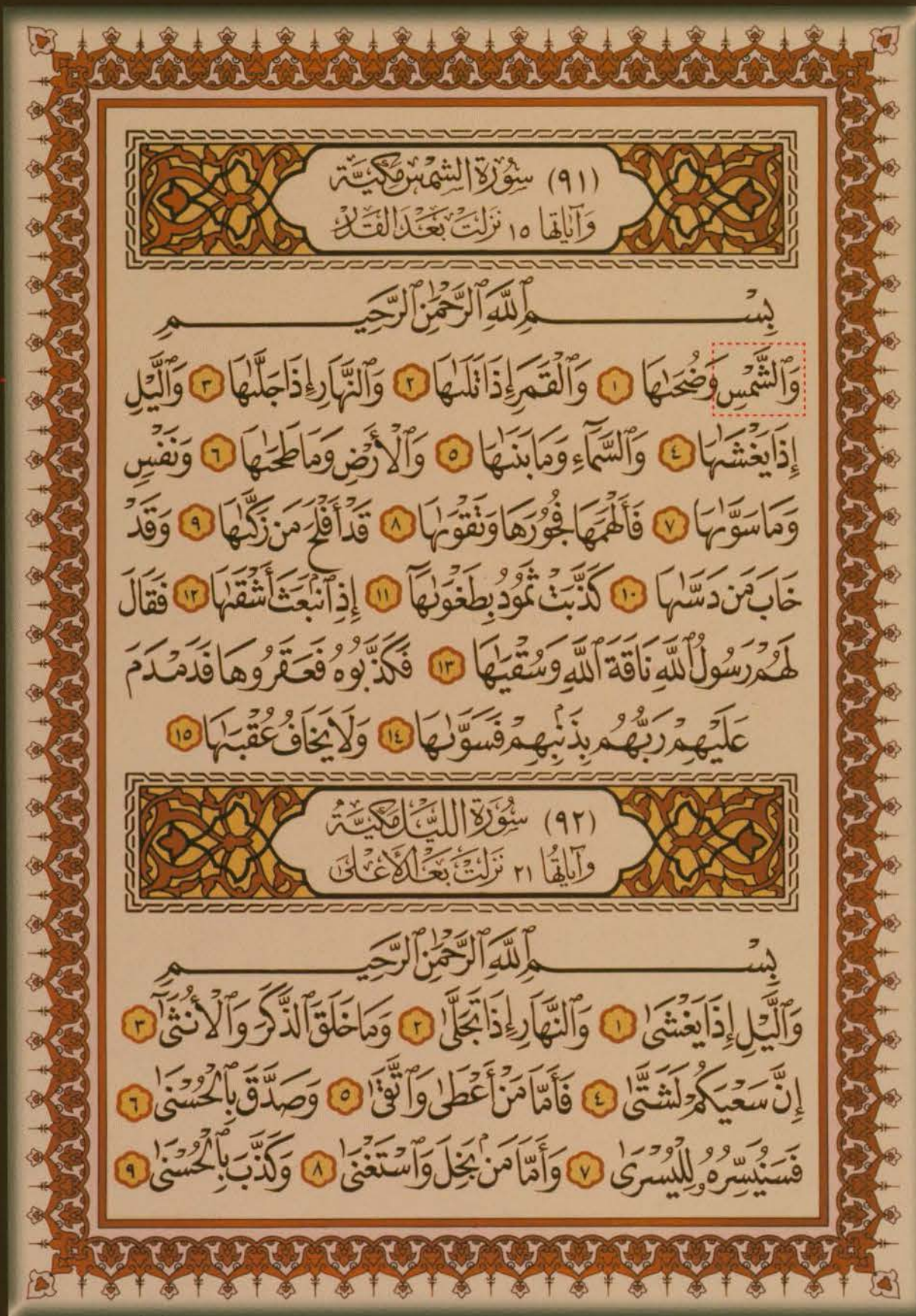
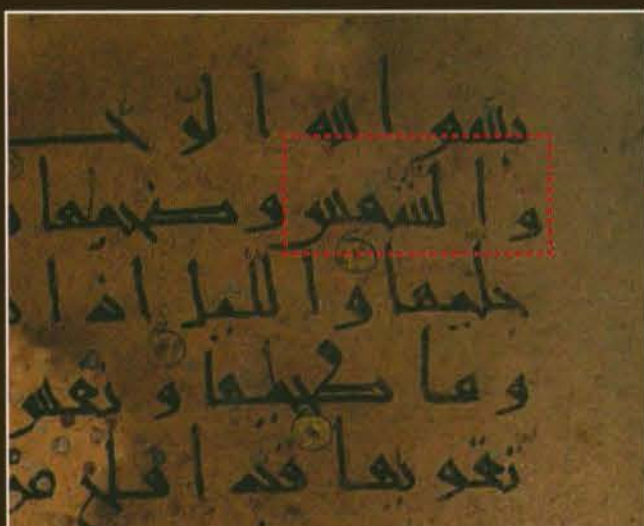
Description: Qur'anic leaf written in eastern kufic script characterised by long upright strokes and short strokes to the left. Written on thick henna-coloured paper with marginal devices, surah headers and roundels marking verse ending.

Reference: Surah ash-Shams, 91 and Surah al-Layl, 92.

Islamic period: 5th century AH.

Origin: Iraq/Persian region.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

By the sun and its brightness.
By the moon as it follows it (the sun).
By the day as it shows up (the sun's) brightness.
By the night as it conceals it (the sun).
By the heaven and Him Who built it.
By the earth and Him Who spread it.

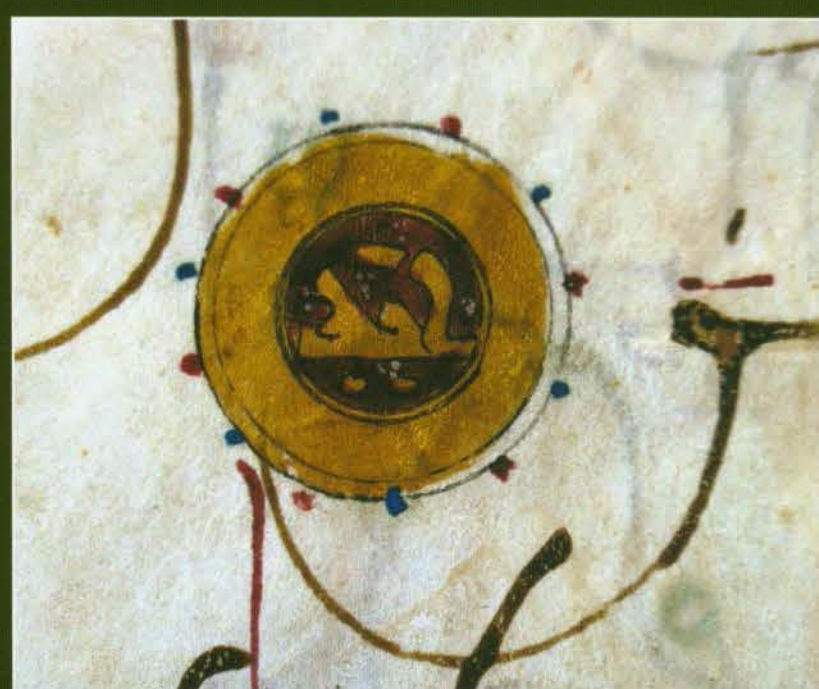
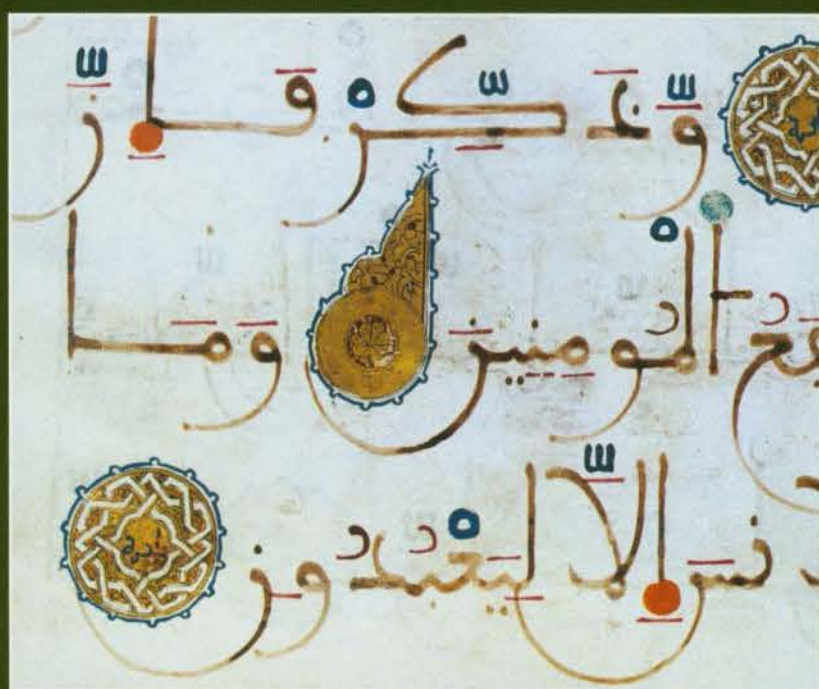
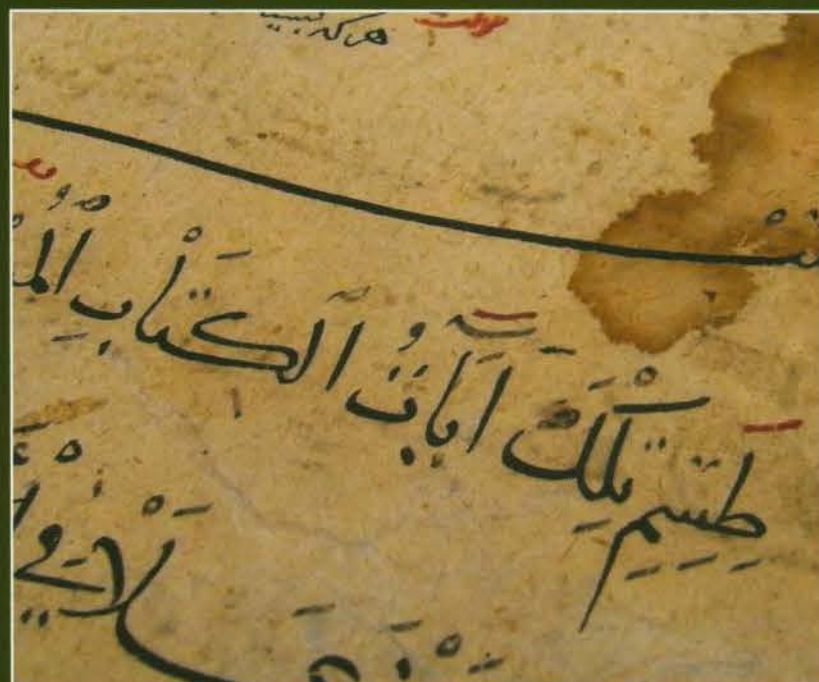
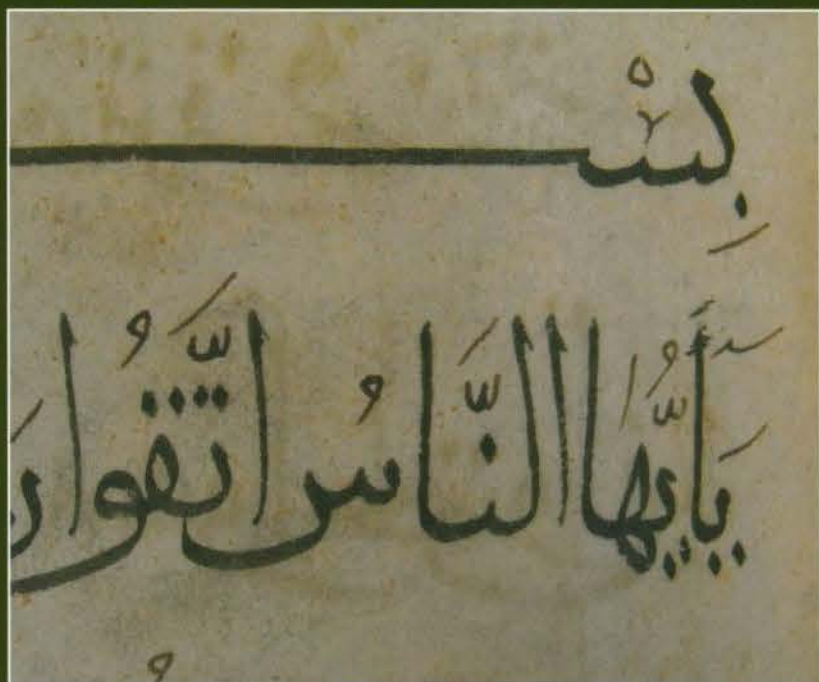
By Nafs (Adam or a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion;
Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed he succeeds
who purifies himself. And indeed he fails who corrupts himself (i.e. disobeys what Allah has ordered, by
rejecting the true Faith of Islamic Monotheism or by following polytheism,
or by doing every kind of evil wicked deed).

Surah ash-Shams (The Sun) 91: 1-10.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّؤُوفِ الرَّحِيمِ
 وَالشَّمْسُ وَكُلُّهَا وَالْقَمَرُ إِذَا أَتَتْهَا وَالنَّجْمُ إِذَا
 حَلَمَهَا وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا تَغَشَّيَهَا وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا
 تَجَلَّى بِهَا وَكُلُّهَا وَتَغَيَّرَ وَفِي سَوَاءٍ مَا لَهَا
 تَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ وَكَّلَهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ
 كَذَّبَهَا تَقْوَاهَا تَكْوَنُ بِهَا إِذَا أَسْمَعْتَ اللَّهَ
 لَمْ يَرْسُولِ اللَّهُ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُغْيَاهَا فَكُنْ
 فَعَقَرُوا مَا فَدَحَهُمْ وَكَلَمَهُمْ وَتَعَفُّوا
 وَلَا يَخَافُ عَذَابَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّؤُوفِ الرَّحِيمِ
 وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا تَغَشَّيَهَا وَالنَّجْمُ إِذَا حَلَمَهَا
 وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا تَجَلَّى بِهَا وَكُلُّهَا وَتَغَيَّرَ
 وَفِي سَوَاءٍ مَا لَهَا تَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ
 مَنْ وَكَّلَهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ كَذَّبَهَا تَقْوَاهَا
 تَكْوَنُ بِهَا إِذَا أَسْمَعْتَ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَرْسُولِ
 اللَّهُ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُغْيَاهَا فَكُنْ فَعَقَرُوا
 مَا فَدَحَهُمْ وَكَلَمَهُمْ وَتَعَفُّوا وَلَا يَخَافُ

Qur'anic leaf written in eastern kufic script on thick henna-coloured paper.



12TH CENTURY CE

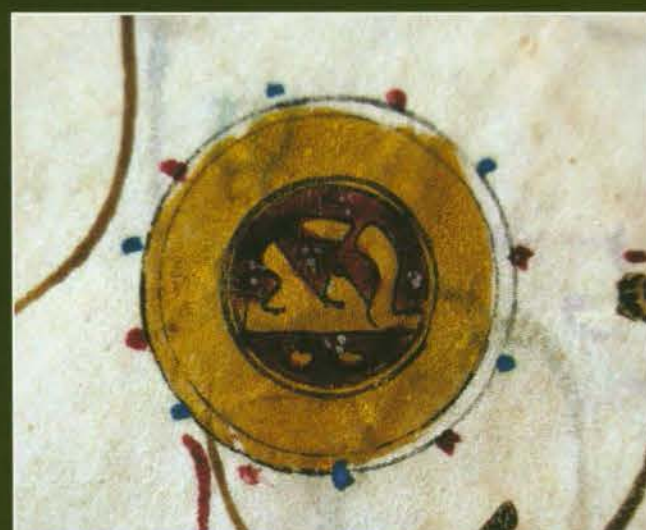
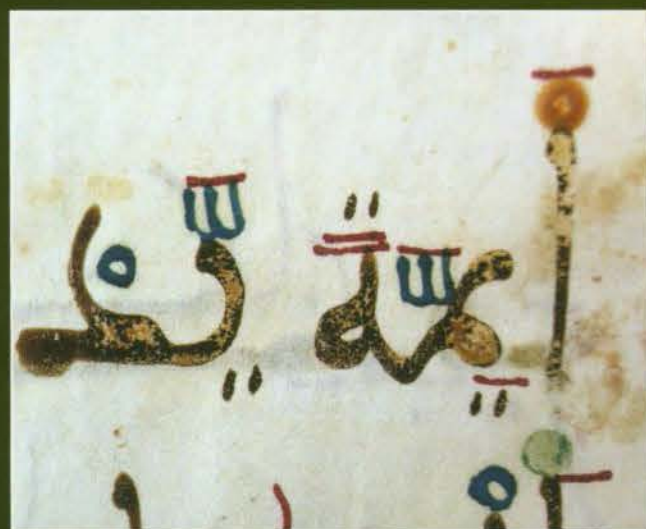
Description: Very rare Andalusian Qur'anic fragment written in elegant *maghribi* script on vellum. Illuminated devices between verses with diacritics in red, vocalisation in blue and green and circular devices in the margin.

Reference: Surah al-Qasas, 28: part of verse 41 to part of verse 43.

Islamic period: 5th/6th century AH.

Origin: Cordoba, Muslim Spain.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



Pharaoh said: "O chiefs! I know not that you have an ilah (a god) other than me. So kindle for me (a fire), O Haman, to bake (bricks out of) clay, and set up for me a Sarhan (a lofty tower, or palace) in order that I may look at (or look for) the Ilah (God) of Moses; and verily, I think that he (Moses) is one of the liars."

And he and his hosts were arrogant in the land, without right, and they thought that they would never return to Us. So, We seized him and his hosts, and We threw them all into the sea (and drowned them). So, behold (O Muhammad ﷺ) what was the end of the Zalimun [wrongdoers, polytheists and those who disbelieved in the Oneness of their Lord (Allah)] or rejected the advice of His Messenger (Moses). And We made them leaders inviting to the Fire: and on the Day of Resurrection, they will not be helped. And We made a curse to follow them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be among Al-Maqbuhun (those who are prevented from receiving Allah's Mercy or any good; despised or destroyed).

And indeed We gave Moses – after We had destroyed the generations of old – the Scripture (the Torah) as an enlightenment for mankind, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might remember.

Surah al-Qasas (The Narration) 28: 38-43.

أَيْمَةً يَكُنْ عَوْرَ الْبَلَدِ وَيَوْمَ
 الْفَيْمَةِ لَا يَنْصُرُونَ  وَأَتْبَعُهُمْ
 فِي مَكَّةَ إِلَى الْغَنَةِ وَيَوْمَ
 الْفَيْمَةِ مِمَّنْ الْمُنْجُونَ  وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
 بِرُغْبَةٍ مَّا أَفْلَحَكَ الْقُرُونُ
 الْأُولَى وَلَمْ يَكُن لِّلنَّاسِ مِنْكَ

Exceptionally rare Andalusian Qur'an fragment written in elegant *maghribi* script on vellum.

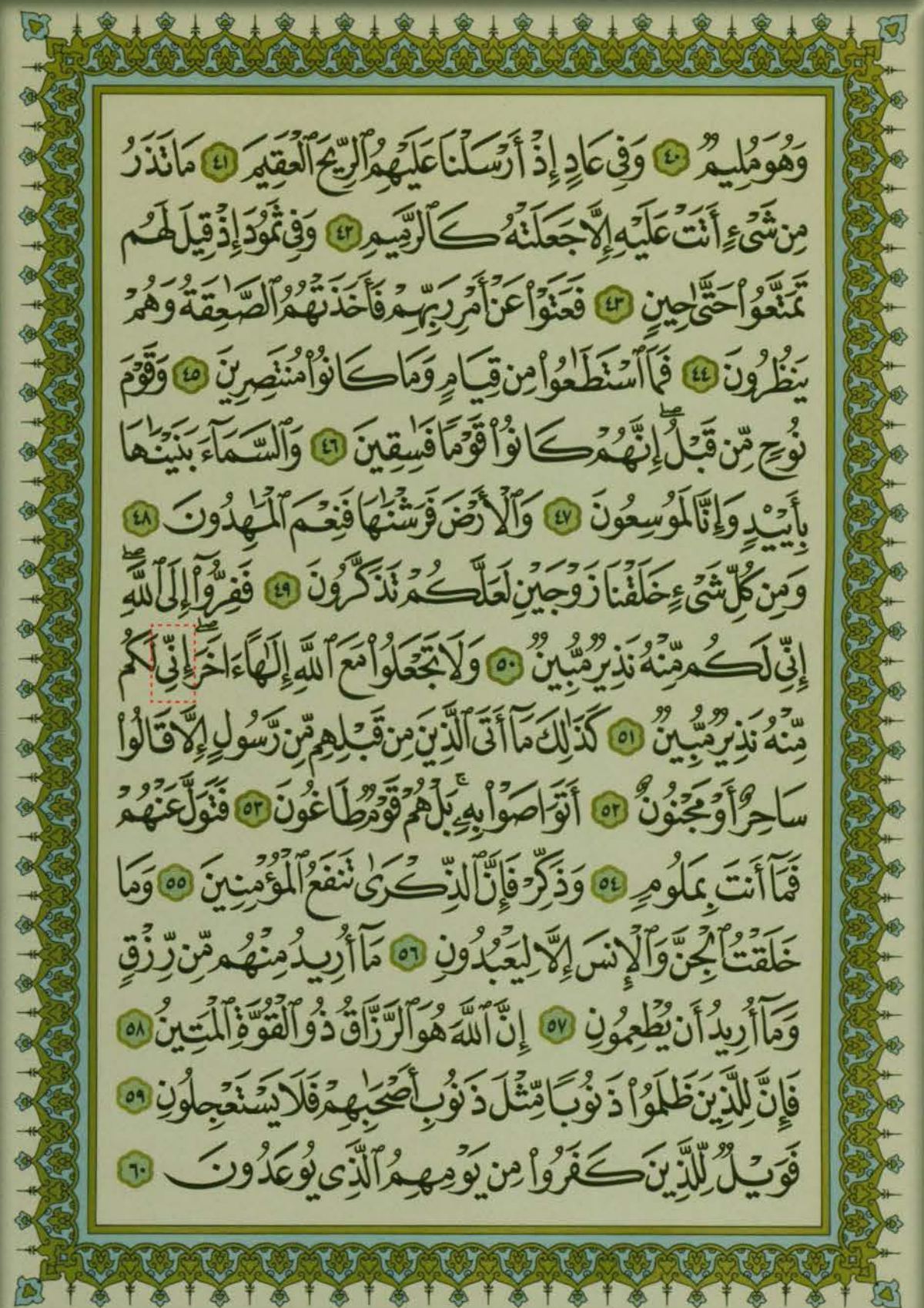
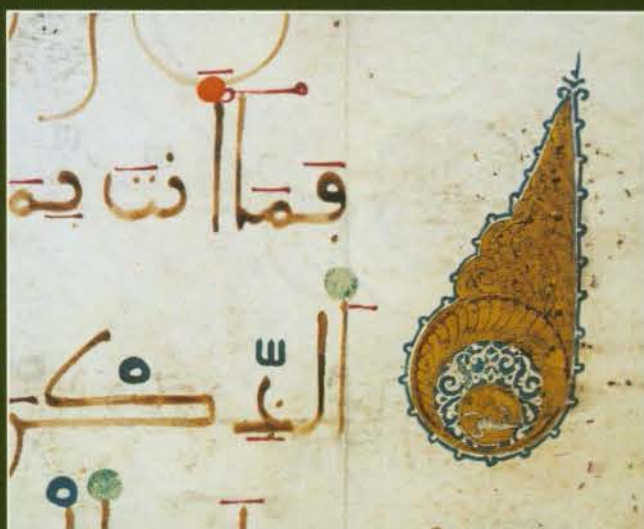
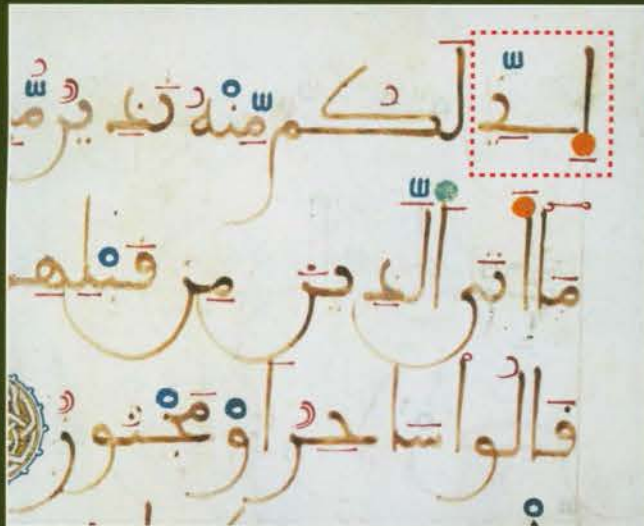
Description: Seven lines of *maghribi* script on vellum in brown ink, illuminated devices between verses, diacritics are in red, vocalisation in blue and green, with circular and tear-shaped devices in the margins.

Reference: Surah adh-Dhaariyaat, 51: part of verse 51 to verse 56.

Islamic period: 5th/6th century AH.

Origin: Muslim Spain

Location: Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, Turkey.



And set not up (or worship not) any other ilah (god) along with Allah [Glorified is He (Alone), Exalted above all that they associate as partners with Him]. Verily, I (Muhammad ﷺ) am a plain warner to you from Him.

Likewise, no Messenger came to those before them but they said: "A sorcerer or a madman!" Have they (the people of the past) transmitted this saying to these (Quraysh pagans)? Nay, they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds (in disbelief)!

So turn away (O Muhammad ﷺ) from them (Quraysh pagans), you are not blameworthy (as you have conveyed Allah's Message). And remind (by preaching the Qur'an, O Muhammad ﷺ), for verily, the reminding profits the believers.

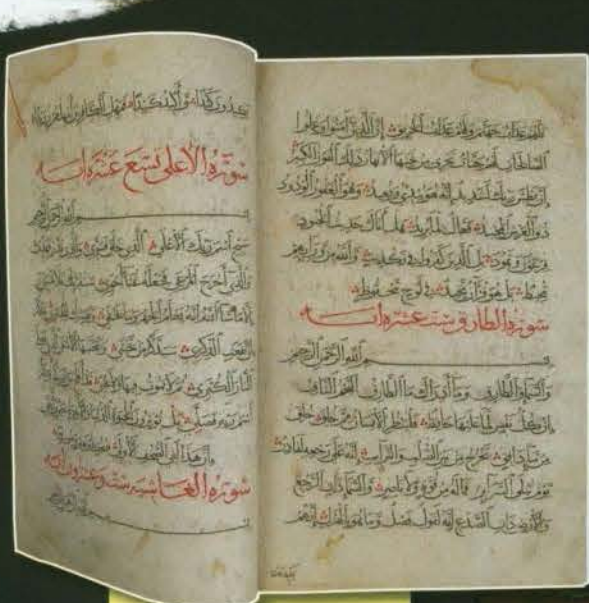
And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone). I seek not any provision from them (i.e. provision for themselves or for My creatures) nor do I ask that they should feed Me (i.e. feed themselves or My creatures).

Surah adh-Dhaariyaat (The Winds that Scatter) 51: 51-57.

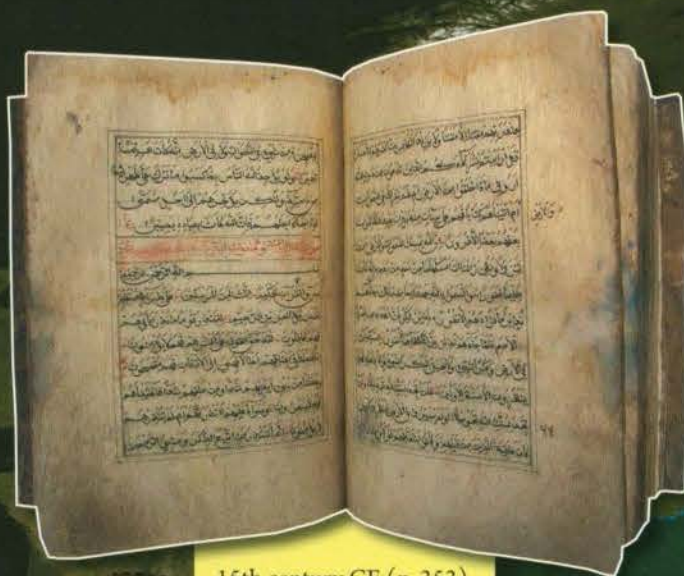
اِنِّ لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مِّنْ كُنَّا لَكُمْ
 مَا نَزَّلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ سُوْرٍ اِلَّا
 قَالُوْا سَا حِرٌّ اَوْ مَجْنُوْنٌ اَوْ صَوَابُهُ
 بِلَهُمْ فَوَيْلٌ لَّكَ اَعُوْزُ فَقَوْلُ عَنْهُمْ
 فَمَا اَنْتَ بِمَلُوْمٍ وَنَذِيْرٌ لَّكَ قُلْ
 اِنِّ لَكِرٌّ قَسْبَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَمَا
 خَلَقْتُ الْجَبْرُوْا اِلَّا نَفْسًا لِّيَّعْبُدُوْا

Andalusian Qur'an fragment written in elegant *maghribi* script on white vellum.

Qur'an manuscripts written between the 13th and 16th centuries CE.



13th century CE (p. 337).



15th century CE (p. 353).



13th century CE (p. 333).



15th century CE (p. 351).







13th century CE (p. 335).



14th century CE (p. 345).

The Spread of Islam

-  Islamic World by 632 CE. This was the year that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away.
-  Islamic World by 661 CE, at the end of the period of the first four Rightly Guided Caliphs of Islam.
-  Islamic World by 750 CE, at the end of the Umayyad Caliphate.
-  Islamic World by 1500 CE.

أَمْوَالًا أَخْلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ
وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ
أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْلَىٰ خُلُوفًا أَمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْلَوْنَ
مَنْسُومًا ۖ وَالضُّرُوفُ وَالْأَرْضُ أَوْزَانُ الْوُجْهِ

13th century CE (p. 331).

كثيرا من الناس من عني فانه مني ومن عني
فانك نور وجهي والى اكناف من دنس وادع
دي لا ع عند تلك الحزور وتاليعها الصلوة فاجعل
افئدة من الناس تغوي المهن وازرعهم من الثمران لعلهم
تذكرون رسالتك على ما يحسن وما يعلن وما يحسن
على الله من عني في الارض وفي السما الحمد لله الذي
ومس على الكبر اعجل وانحز ان في اجمع النفا
رب اخلي مني من الصلوة ومن عني رسالتك على
رسالتك في قول الذي في اليومين يوم يوم الحيا

14th century CE (p. 343).

فانك من الناس من عني فانه مني ومن عني
فانك نور وجهي والى اكناف من دنس وادع
دي لا ع عند تلك الحزور وتاليعها الصلوة فاجعل
افئدة من الناس تغوي المهن وازرعهم من الثمران لعلهم
تذكرون رسالتك على ما يحسن وما يعلن وما يحسن
على الله من عني في الارض وفي السما الحمد لله الذي
ومس على الكبر اعجل وانحز ان في اجمع النفا
رب اخلي مني من الصلوة ومن عني رسالتك على
رسالتك في قول الذي في اليومين يوم يوم الحيا

15th century CE (p. 349).

ما لك من غير الخلق قال
فالحق والحق اقول لا املان
جعنك منك ومنك منك
اجعنت قل ما انا كقولك
من: الحمد وما انا من الخلق
ان في الاخرة العاقبة
وتعلمت بما وعدت خفي

16th century CE (p. 357).

الذين آمنوا هم الذين آمنوا
لم اخذتهم من قبل ان
تكونوا من الناس خاف
الارض في يوم من وجع
لة انك لا تترك رب العالمين
وجعل فيها روابي من فيها
وبارك فيها وقادها المومنين
حيث اربعة ايام من عود الدنيا
من استويك الى السما وفي
لحات هناك لعا وبلاد
انها طوعا او كرها قالنا انها
كلا يعين فقصص صنع موم
في يوم من ولحي بي

16th century CE (p. 359).

فانك من الناس من عني فانه مني ومن عني
فانك نور وجهي والى اكناف من دنس وادع
دي لا ع عند تلك الحزور وتاليعها الصلوة فاجعل
افئدة من الناس تغوي المهن وازرعهم من الثمران لعلهم
تذكرون رسالتك على ما يحسن وما يعلن وما يحسن
على الله من عني في الارض وفي السما الحمد لله الذي
ومس على الكبر اعجل وانحز ان في اجمع النفا
رب اخلي مني من الصلوة ومن عني رسالتك على
رسالتك في قول الذي في اليومين يوم يوم الحيا

16th century CE (p. 361).

فانك من الناس من عني فانه مني ومن عني
فانك نور وجهي والى اكناف من دنس وادع
دي لا ع عند تلك الحزور وتاليعها الصلوة فاجعل
افئدة من الناس تغوي المهن وازرعهم من الثمران لعلهم
تذكرون رسالتك على ما يحسن وما يعلن وما يحسن
على الله من عني في الارض وفي السما الحمد لله الذي
ومس على الكبر اعجل وانحز ان في اجمع النفا
رب اخلي مني من الصلوة ومن عني رسالتك على
رسالتك في قول الذي في اليومين يوم يوم الحيا

14th century CE (p. 341).

Central Asia

China

India

Malay Peninsula

Indian Ocean

Borneo

Java



13TH CENTURY CE

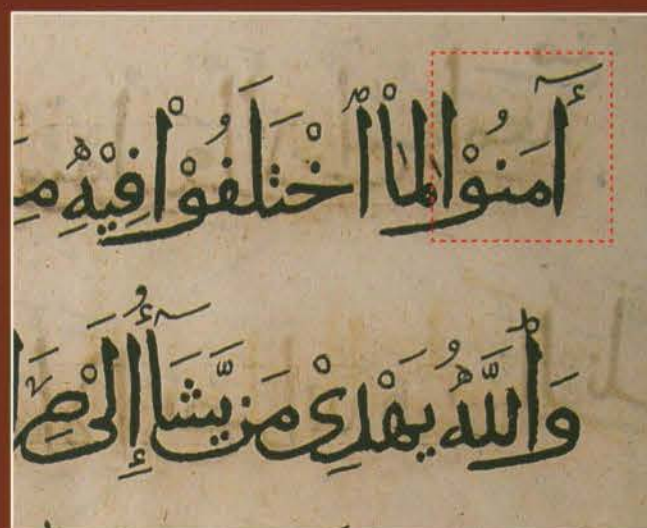
Description: Qur'an page written in large *muhaqqaq* script on very thick paper. The text on the reverse side is just visible as the scribe has used an acidic ink that has caused the ink to bleed through the page.

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2: part of verse 213 to part of verse 214.

Islamic period: 7th century AH.

Origin: Middle East.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



Mankind was one community and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent down the Scripture in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed. And only those to whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it after clear proofs had come to them through hatred, one to another. Then Allah by His Leave guided those who believed to the truth of that wherein they differed. And Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path.

Or think you that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who believed along with him said, "When (will come) the Help of Allah?" Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allah is near!

They ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) what they should spend. Say: "Whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and Al-Masakin (the needy) and the wayfarer, and whatever you do of good deeds, truly, Allah knows it well.

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 213-215.

آمَنُوا لِمَا أَخْلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِأَنَّهُ
 وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ
 أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُوا أَن تَقُولُوا
 يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
 مَسْتَهْمِرِينَ الْبَأْسَ أَوِ الْفِرَاقَ أَوْ لُفُوقَهُ

A very large Qur'an page magnificently written in a bold *muhaqqaq* style of Arabic script.

Description: A very large Qur'anic leaf from the late Abbasid period. Written in fine *muhaqqaq* script using black ink with verse markers illuminated in blue, gold and red ink.

Reference: Surah aal-Imraan, 3: end of verse 168 to part of verse 176.

Islamic period: 7th century AH.

Origin: Egypt/Syria.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



And what you suffered (of the disaster) on the day (of the battle of Uhud when) the two armies met, was by the Leave of Allah, in order that He might test the believers. And that He might test the hypocrites, it was said to them: "Come, fight in the way of Allah or (at least) defend yourselves." They said: "Had we known that fighting will take place, we would certainly have followed you." They were that day, nearer to disbelief than to Faith, saying with their mouths what was not in their hearts. And Allah has full knowledge of what they conceal.

(They are) the ones who said about their killed brethren while they themselves sat (at home): "If only they had listened to us, they would not have been killed." Say: "Avert death from your own selves, if you speak the truth."

Think not of those who are killed in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision.

They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty and rejoice for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice in a grace and a bounty from Allah, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers.

Surah aal-Imraan (The Family of Imraan) 3: 166-171.

صَادِقِينَ وَالتَّحْسِنَ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَنْبَاءُ الْخَيْلِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُزَكُّوْنَ

فَأَمَّا أَمْوَالُهُمْ فَتَمَّ بِهَا الْبَقَاةُ
وَأَمَّا أَمْوَالُهُمْ فَتَمَّ بِهَا الْبَقَاةُ
مُحَمَّدٌ

فَحَبِيزَ لِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبِشِرُوا بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يُلْقُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ

الْأَخَوَفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ وَيَسْتَبِشِرُونَ بِمَنْجِيهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلِهِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِيعُ

أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا



الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
الْبَقَاةُ

مِنْهُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا الْجُعْدَةَ الْكَبِيرَةَ وَالنَّاسُ أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَنْفِقُوا وَلَكِنْ لَمْ يَحْشَوْهُمْ

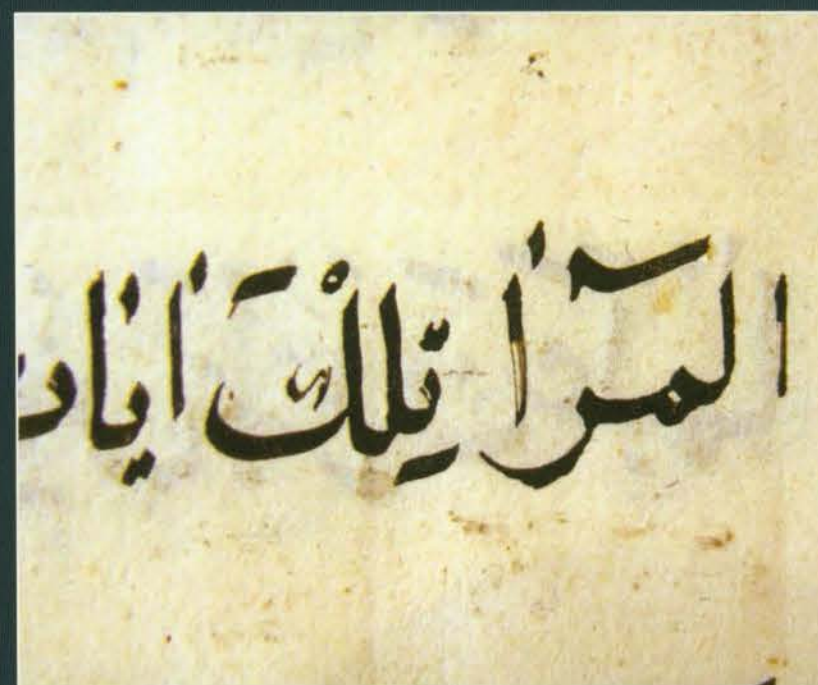
فَرَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ

وَفَضْلِهِ لِيُخْصِفَهُمْ سُوءَ أَسْوَارِهِمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

ذَلِكَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَخُوفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا زَانِكُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا لِمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَوْنًا فَإِنَّهُمْ لَبِئْسَ مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ

بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
الْبَقَاةُ



14TH CENTURY CE

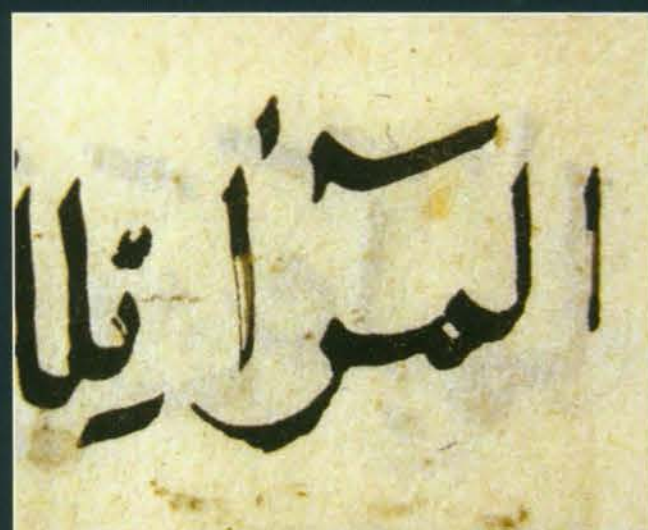
Description: A beautiful Qur'an manuscript from the Middle East handwritten in *naskh* script. This very well preserved manuscript lacks ornaments or design work. Simple open circles in red ink designate verse endings.

Reference: Surah ar-Ra'd, 13: verse 1 to part of verse 15.

Islamic period: 8th century AH.

Origin: Middle East.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Alif-Lam-Mim-Ra. These are the Verses of the Book (the Qur'an), and that which has been revealed to you (Muhammad ﷺ) from your Lord is the truth, but most men believe not.

Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then, He rose above (Istawa) the Throne. He has subjected the sun and the moon (to continue going round), each running (its course) for a term appointed. He manages and regulates all affairs; He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail, that you may believe with certainty in the Meeting with your Lord.

And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and rivers and of every kind of fruit He made Zawjain Ithnain (two in pairs – may mean two kinds or it may mean: of two varieties, e.g. black and white, sweet and sour, small and big). He brings the night as a cover over the day. Verily, in these things, there are Ayat (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc.) for a people who reflect.

Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 1-3.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْمُرَاتِلَ أَيْاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ لَا كُفُوفًا
 أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ زُرُقًا
 اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ
 الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَكُمْ بَلَاءٌ رِبْكُمْ نَافُونَ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ
 وَجْعَهَا رِاسِي وَأَسَافًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا رُجُوعًا
 يُغْنِي لَكُمْ النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ
 قَطْعَ مُجَادِرَاتٍ جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا نَاقُورٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 حَبْنُونَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 فِي هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ وَإِنْ تَعْجَبْ حَسْبُ قَوْلِهِمْ أَتَدْرِكُونَ
 إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ خَائِضَاتِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَزَيْدًا وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَعْمَالُ
 فِي عَذَابِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَنْجَابِ لَهَا خَالِدُونَ وَسَبْعُونَ
 بِالسَّبْعَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُ مِنْ نَبْلِهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَإِنَّ تِلْكَ

Description: Large Qur'an leaf written in *muhaqqaq* script with interlinear Persian translation written in *nasta'liq*. Extensive use of decorated roundels and gold marginal ornaments.

Reference: Surah Ibraheem, 14: part of verse 36 to the end of verse 41.

Islamic period: 8th century AH.

Origin: Persia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



O my Lord! They have indeed led astray many among mankind. But whoso follows me, he verily, is of me. And whoso disobeys me, still You are indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Kaaba at Makkah) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform As-Salat (the prayers). So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks.

O our Lord! Certainly, You know what we conceal and what we reveal. Nothing on the earth or in the heaven is hidden from Allah. All praise and thanks are Allah's, Who has given me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Verily, my Lord is indeed the All-Hearer of invocations.

O my Lord! Make me one who performs As-Salat (the prayers), and (also) from my offspring, our Lord! And accept my invocation. Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and (all) the believers on the Day when the reckoning will be established.

Surah Ibraheem (Abraham) 14: 36-41.

كثيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي

فَأَنكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ رَّبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِي بَوَادِغِي

ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْحَرَمِ رَّبَّنَا لِيَقِيْمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ

أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ

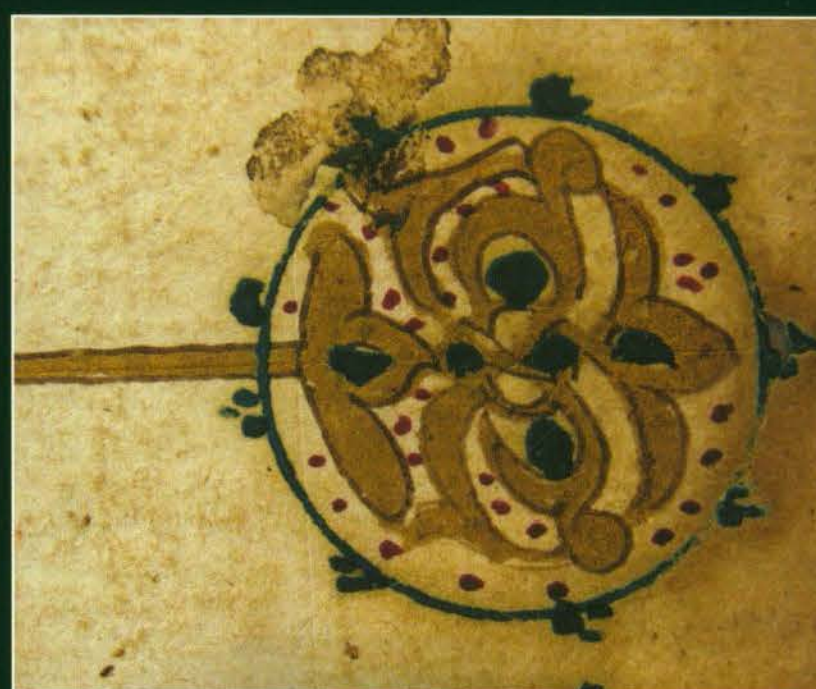
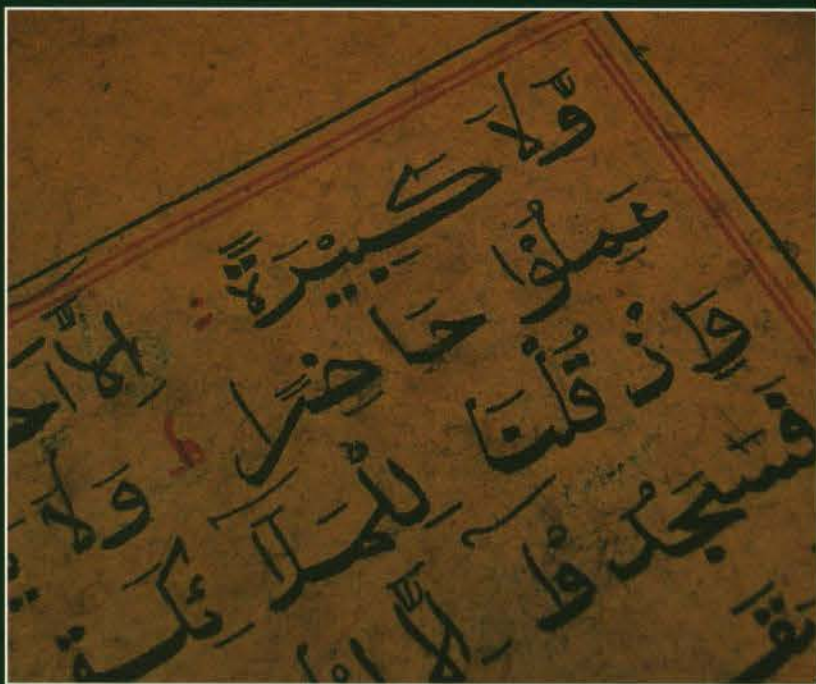
يَشْكُرُونَ رَّبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نَخْفِي وَمَا نَعْلُنُ وَمَا نَكْفِي

عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي

وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيَّ

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ يَتَّقِي الصَّلَاةَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَّبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَائِي

رَّبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ



15TH CENTURY CE

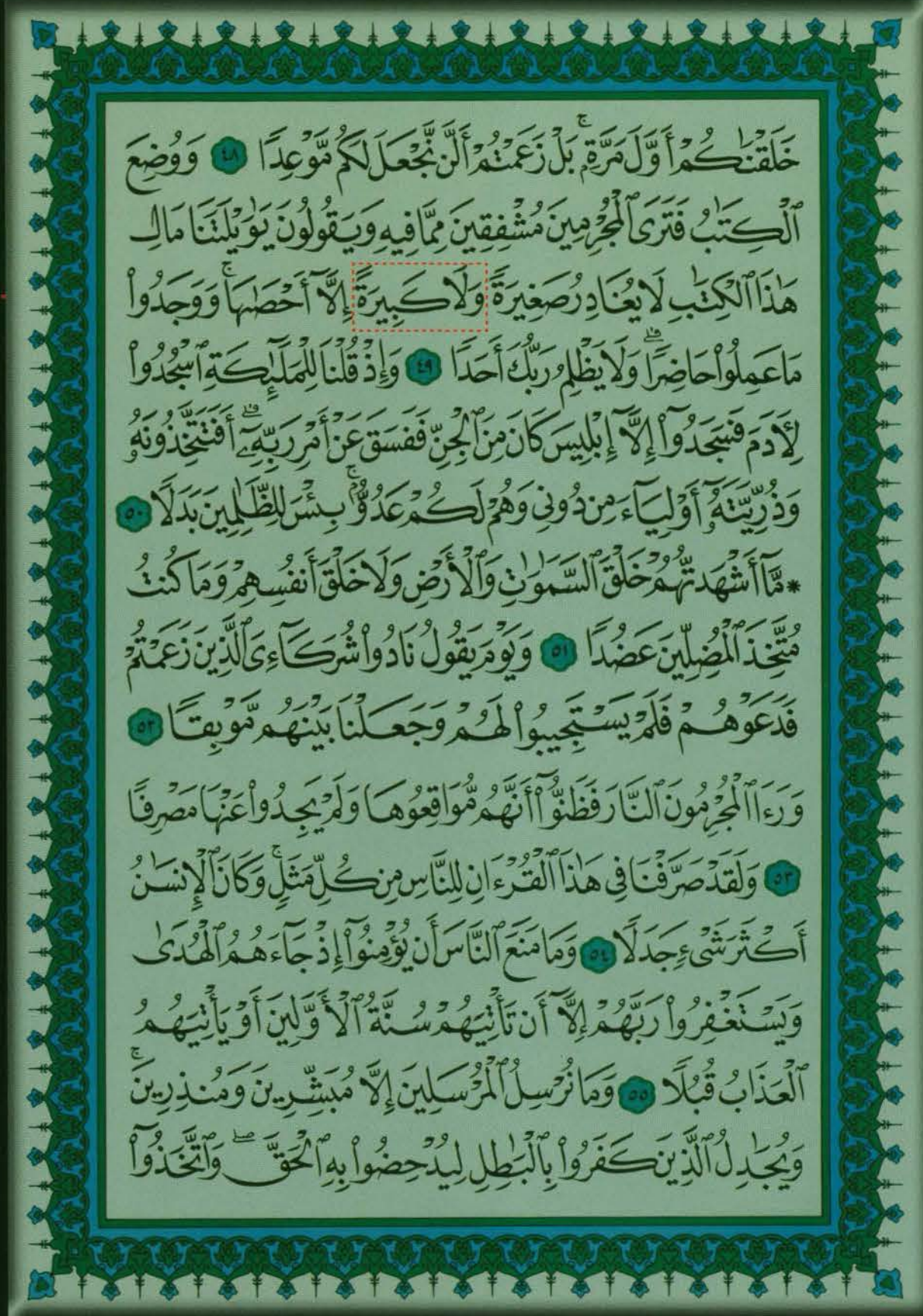
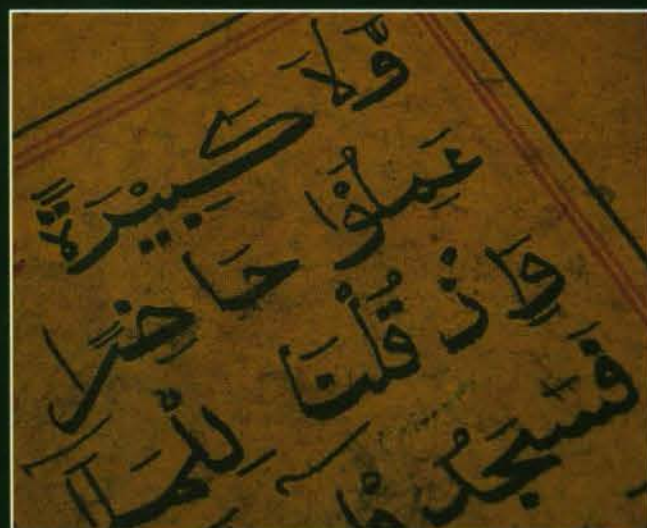
Description: Fragile Qur'an page written in traditional *bihari* script on dark coloured hand made paper. Very sparse decoration with a simple line border. A group of four red dots on yellow mark the end of each verse.

Reference: Surah al-Kahf, 18: part of verse 49 to part of verse 55.

Islamic period: 9th century AH.

Origin: Bihar, India.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



And the Book (one's Record) will be placed (in the right hand for a believer in the Oneness of Allah, and in the left hand for a disbeliever in the Oneness of Allah), and you will see the Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners), fearful of that which is (recorded) therein. They will say: "Woe to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers!" And they will find all that they did, placed before them, and your Lord treats no one with injustice.

And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves to Adam." So they prostrated themselves except Iblis (Satan). He was one of the jinn; he disobeyed the Command of his Lord. Will you then take him (Iblis) and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you? What an evil is the exchange for the Zalimun (polytheists, and wrong doers, etc).

I (Allah) made them (Iblis and his offspring) not to witness (nor took their help in) the creation of the heavens and the earth and not (even) their own creation, nor was I (Allah) to take the misleaders as helpers. And (remember) the Day He will say: "Call those whom you pretended were partners of Mine." Then they will cry to them, but they will not answer them, and We shall put Maubiq (a barrier) between them.

Surah al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 49-52.

وَلَا كِبِيرَةً: إِلَّا أَحْصَيْتُهَا وَوَجَدَ مَا
 عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا. وَلَا يَظُنُّ رَبُّكَ احْتِدَارَكَ
 فَإِنْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
 فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ. أَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ
 فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ. أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَ
 ذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ
 عَدُوٌّ. بَشِّرِ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا
 أَشْهَدُهُمْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَلَا خَلَقَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا كُنْتَ مَتَّخِذَ الْمُظْلِمِينَ
 عَصَدًا. وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَائِيَ
 الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا
 لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَوْبِقًا: وَرَأَى
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ لَهَا قَعْوَهَا
 وَمَنْ يَجِدْ فِي عَمَلٍ مُصْرَقًا: وَلَقَدْ صَدَقْنَا فِي
 هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ أَلَمٍ
 مَثَلًا وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرُ شَقِيًّا
 بَدَلًا: وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا

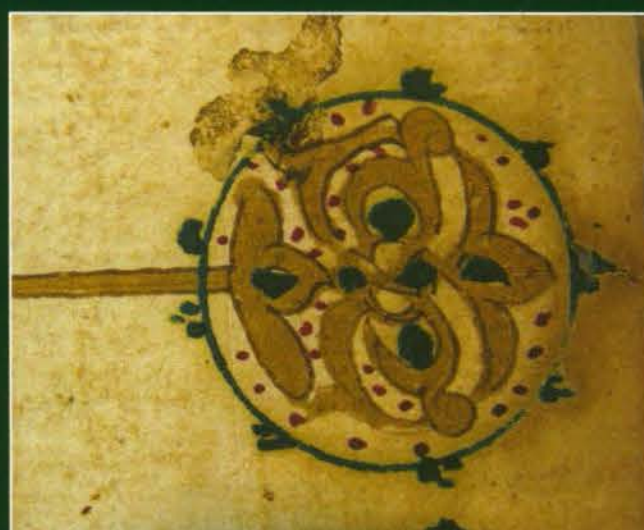
Description: Very small Qur'an written in traditional *andalusian/maghribi* script. Vowels are marked using a range of colours. The surah header is within a floral frame written in gold coloured *kufic* style script. Three gold medallions adorn the margin.

Reference: Surah al-Fatihah, 1 and Surah al-Baqarah, 2: verse 1 to the start of verse 15.

Islamic period: 9th century AH.

Origin: North Africa.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).

The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)

You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).

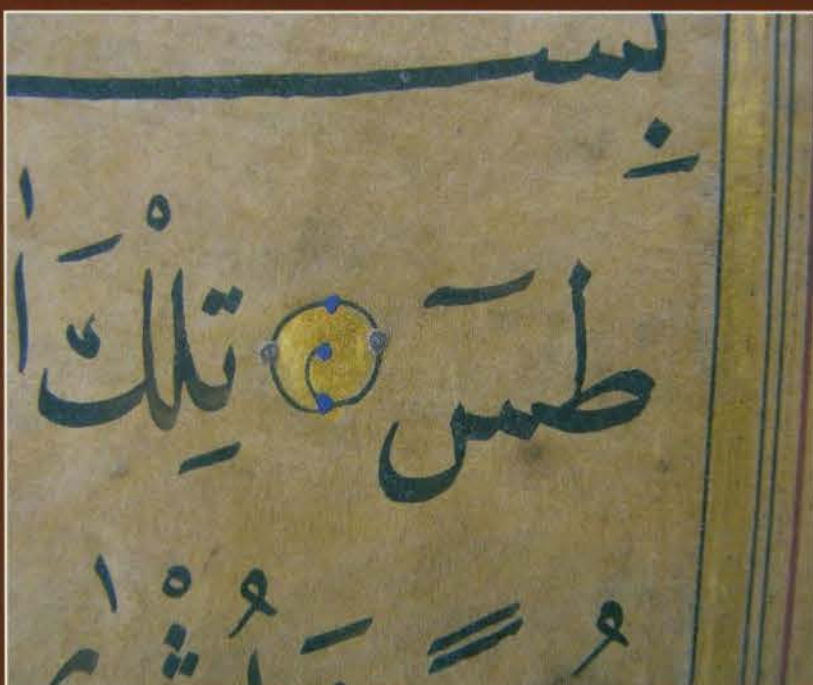
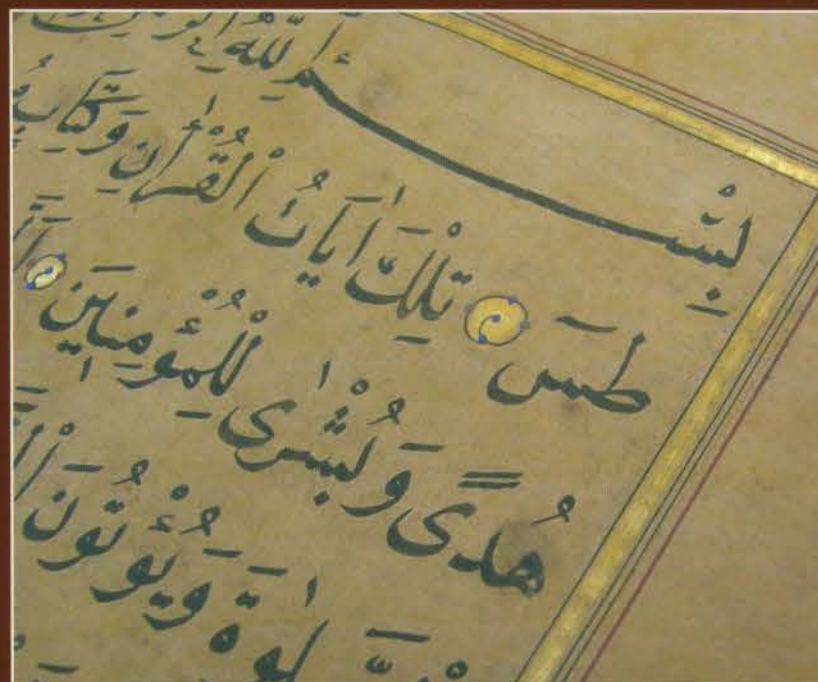
Guide us to the Straight Way

The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray.

Surah al-Fatihah (The Opening) 1: 1-7.



Very small Qur'an written in traditional *maghrebi* script.



16TH CENTURY CE

Description: Beautifully decorated Qur'an leaf written in black *bihari* script with important words such as 'Allah' written in gold. The surah header text is heavily decorated. Simple gold coloured rosette shapes act as verse separators.

Reference: Last part of Surah Saad, 38 and the start of Surah az-Zumar, 39.

Islamic period: 10th century AH.

Origin: Bihar, India.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

The revelation of this Book (the Qur'an) is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. Verily, We have sent down the Book to you (Muhammad ﷺ) in truth. So, worship Allah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only.

Surely, the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allah only. And those who take Auliya' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah." Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever.

Had Allah willed to take a son (or offspring), He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created. But Glorified is He! (He is above such things.) He is Allah, the One, the Irresistible. He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night.

And He has set the sun and the moon (on a fixed course) for an appointed term.

Verily, He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.

Surah az-Zumar (The Groups) 39: 1-5.

فِعْزَتِكَ لَا تُؤَيِّدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا
 مَلَائِكَةً مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ قَالَ
 فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقُّ أَقُولُ لَا مَلَأَتْ
 جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
 مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ
 إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَاقِي الْعَاطِلِينَ
 وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ
 الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ

Description: Fine example of a Qur'an leaf written in *bihari* script with the top, middle and bottom lines written in gold ink. The marginal device has the words *thalatul arba* (34) written in it. Simple rosette shaped markers denote the end of each verse.

Reference: Surah Fussilat, 41: part of verse 8 through to part of verse 12.

Islamic period: 10th century AH.

Origin: Bihar, India.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



Truly, those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ) and do righteous good deeds, for them will be an endless reward that will never stop (i.e. Paradise).

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days? And you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)."

He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal for all those who ask (about its creation).

Then He rose over (Istawa) towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly." They both said: "We come willingly."

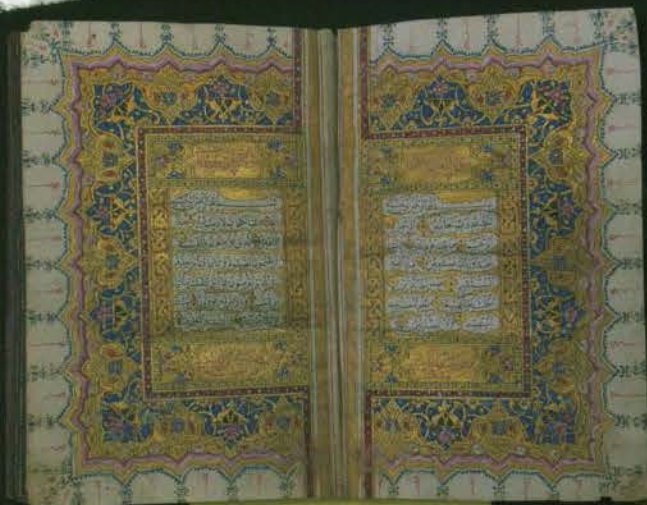
Then He completed and finished their creation (as) seven heavens in two Days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest) heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard. Such is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knower.

Surah Fussilat (They are Explained in Detail) 41: 8-12.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ **قُلْ** إِنِّي لَمْ
 أَتَكْفُرُونَ **بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ**
الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجَعَلُو
لَهُ أَنْدَادًا ذَلِكَ رِبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا
وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَامًا
فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِلْأَيَّامِ
ثَمَرًا اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ
 رُخْصَةٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ
 ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا
 طَائِعِينَ **فَغَضِبَ سَبْعَ سَعَاتٍ**
فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى

Impressive example of a 400 year old Qur'an leaf written in *bihari* script.

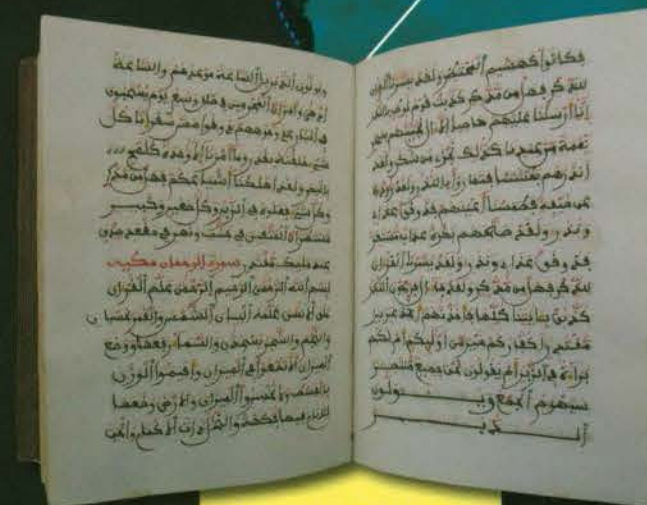
Qur'an manuscripts written between the 17th and 20th centuries CE.



19th century CE (p. 383).



20th century CE (p. 395).



17th century CE (p. 369).

The Spread of Islam



Islamic World by 632 CE. This was the year that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away.



Islamic World by 661 CE, at the end of the period of the first four Rightly Guided Caliphs of Islam.



Islamic World by 750 CE, at the end of the Umayyad Caliphate.



Islamic World by 1500 CE.



20th century CE (p. 393).



18th century CE (p. 379).



17th Century CE (p. 371).



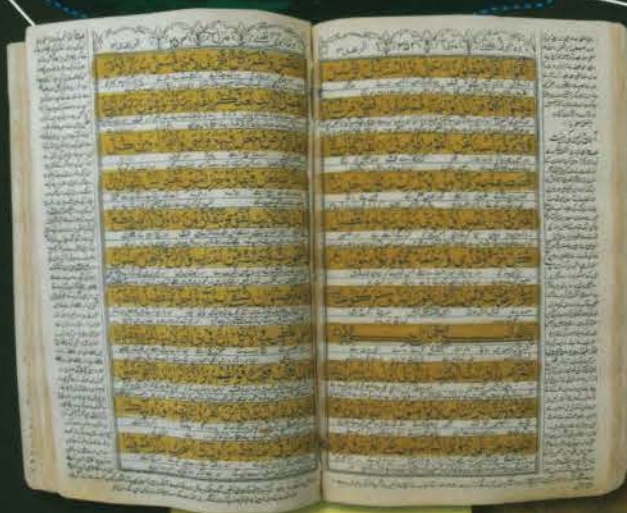
17th Century CE (p. 367).



18th Century CE (p. 375).



19th Century CE (p. 385).



20th Century CE (p. 391).



19th Century CE (p. 387).



18th Century CE (p. 377).

Central Asia

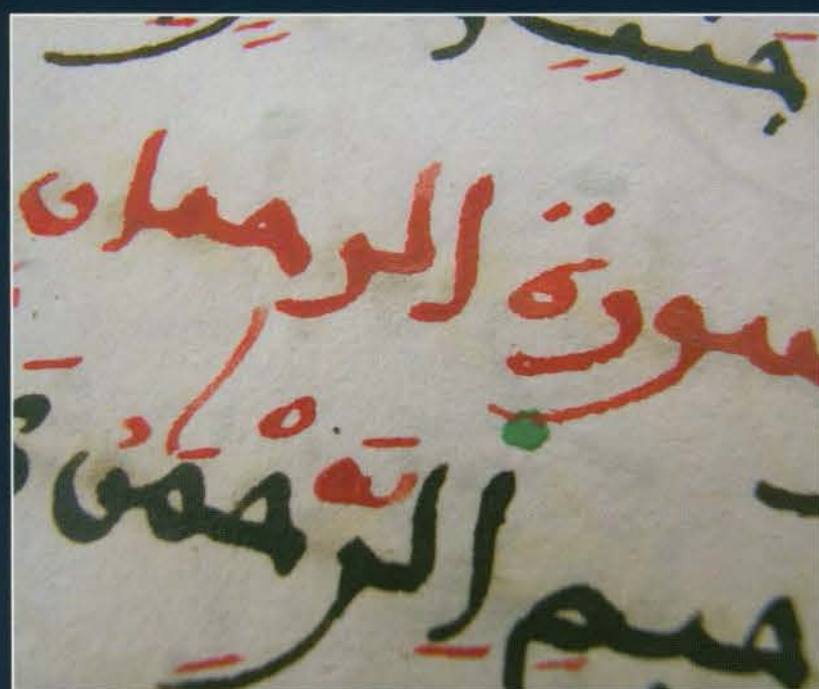
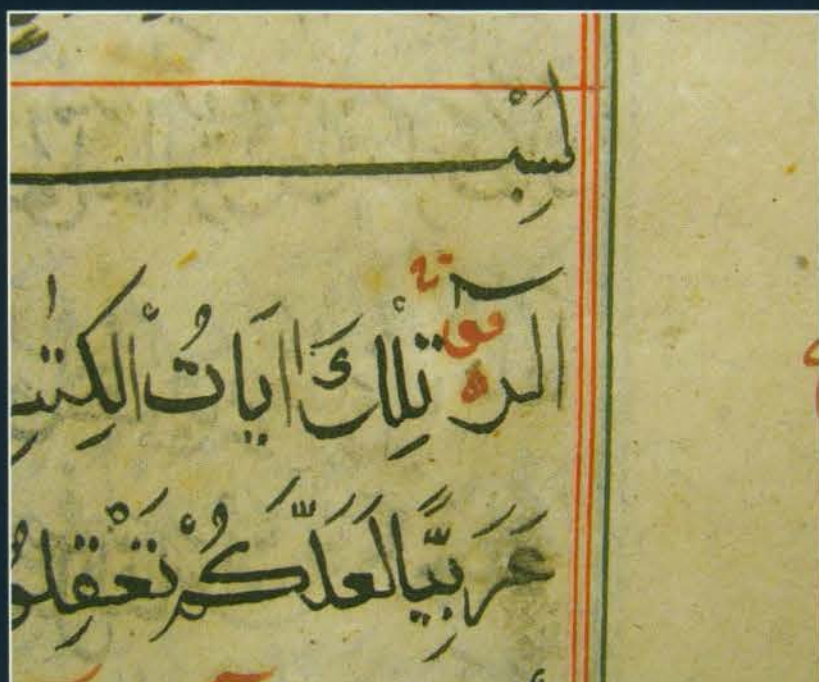
China

India

Malay Peninsula

Indian Ocean

Borneo



17TH CENTURY CE

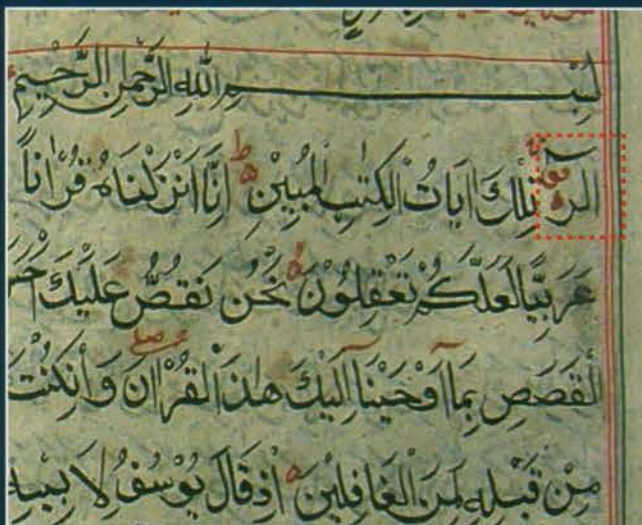
Description: A Qur'an written in black ink using *naskh* script on handmade paper within a triple lined border. *Madda* signs and verse endings are indicated in red ink. The last few words of the previous surah are incorporated into the next surah header.

Reference: Surah Yusuf, 12: verse 1 to part of verse 12.

Islamic period: 11th century AH.

Origin: Indian subcontinent.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

"Alif-Lam-Ra. These are the Verses of the Clear Book (the Qur'an that makes clear the legal and illegal things, legal laws, a guidance and a blessing). Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.

We relate to you (Muhammad ﷺ) the best of stories through Our Revelations to you, of this Qur'an. And before this, you were among those who knew nothing about it (the Qur'an). (Remember) when Joseph said to his father: "O my father! Verily, I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon – I saw them prostrating themselves to me." He (the father) said: "O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they should arrange a plot against you. Verily, Shaitan (Satan) is to man a manifest enemy!

"Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of dreams (and other things) and perfect His Favour on you and on the offspring of Ya'qub (Jacob), as He perfected it on your fathers, Ibraheem (Abraham) and Ishaq (Isaac) aforetime! Verily, your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

Surah Yusuf (Joseph) 12: 1-6.

اَنَا مُنْظَرُونَ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَئِيْهِ
 يَرْجِعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا ذِكْرُكَ
 سِوَهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَخَافُ أَنْ تَعْمَلُونَ فِيهِ مَالَةً فَاحِدَةً ۚ
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الرَّحْمَنُ ذَٰلِكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ۚ اِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا
 عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۚ خُنْ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
 الْقَصَصِ مَا أَفْحِينَا إِلَيْكَ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنُ وَإِن كُنْتَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ۚ إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ
 يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
 وَانْتَهَمْتُ لِي سَاجِدًا ۖ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْ
 يَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
 لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ

ربو

رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَوَالِفِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ
 نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ اِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ
 حَكِيمٌ ۚ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِلِّ
 بَالِغِينَ ۚ إِذْ قَالَ الْيُوسُفُ لِأَخِيهِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ إِنَّمَا
 أَتْلُو ۚ عَصِي ۚ إِنَّ أَبَا لَئِي ضَلَّ مُبِينٍ ۚ اقْتُلُوا
 يُوسُفَ وَأَطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخَلَ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبْيَاسٍ
 وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ ۚ قَالَ قَائِلٌ
 مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوَىٰ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ
 يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّاسَةِ إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ ۚ قَالُوا
 يَا أَبَا نَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ
 أَرْسَلْهُ مَعَ غَدَاةٍ تَرْجُو وَيَلْعَبُ

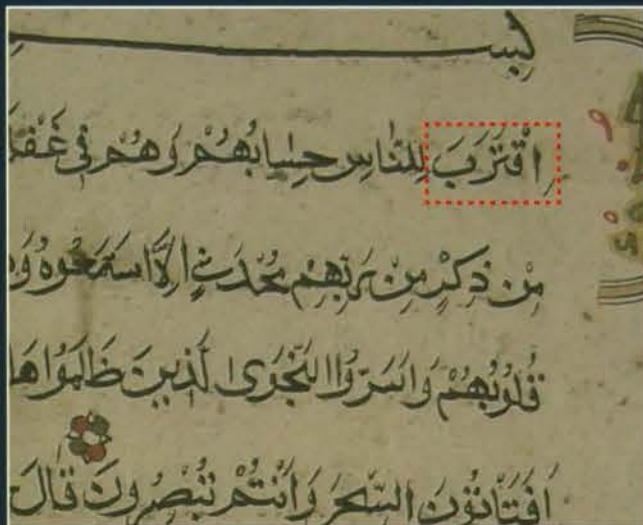
Description: A large Qur'an manuscript decorated throughout with floral designs and marginal devices in local colour formations of red and green. Written using a local variant of the *naskh* script on thick hand made paper.

Reference: Surah al-Anbiyaa, 21: verses 1 to 22.

Islamic period: 11th century AH.

Origin: Dagestan.

Location: Exhibition Islam collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

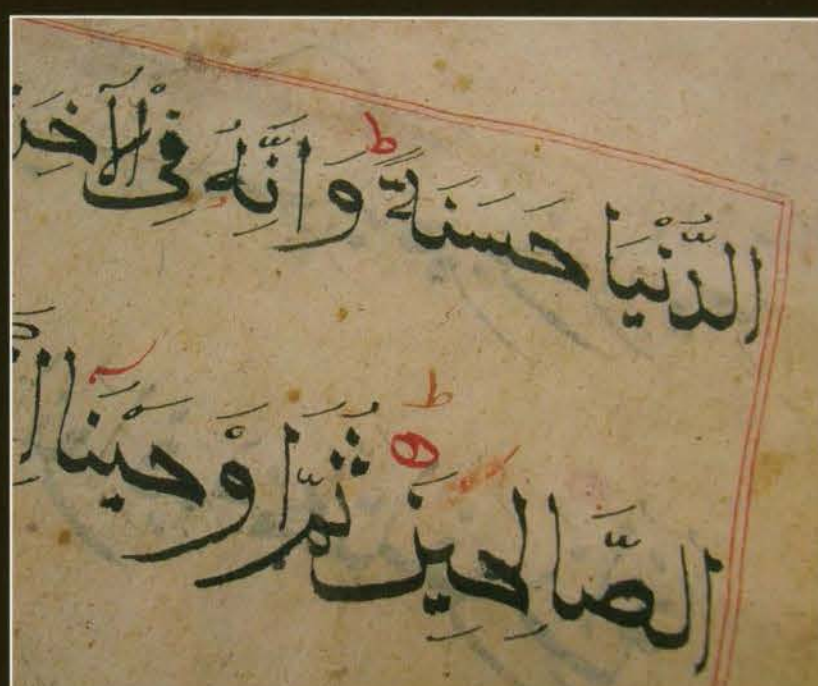
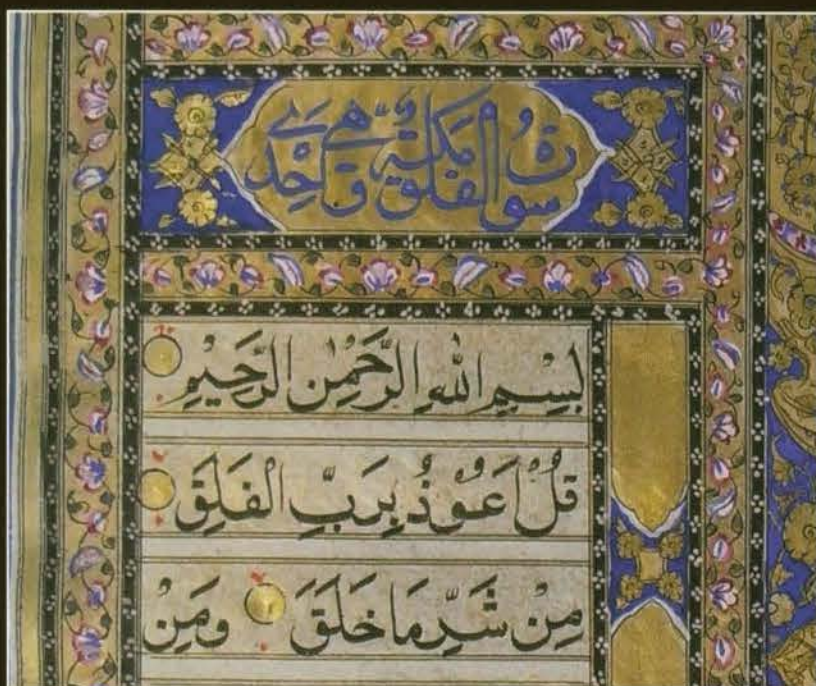
Draws near for mankind their reckoning, while they turn away in heedlessness. Comes not to them an admonition from their Lord as a recent Revelation but they listen to it while they play. With their hearts occupied (with evil things). Those who do wrong, conceal their private counsels, (saying): "Is this (Muhammad ﷺ) more than a human being like you? Will you submit to magic while you see it?" He (Muhammad ﷺ) said: "My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heavens and on earth. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." Nay, they say: "These (Revelations of the Qur'an which are inspired to Muhammad ﷺ) are mixed up false dreams! Nay, he has invented it! Nay, he is a poet! Let him then bring us an Ayah (sign as a proof) like the ones that the former (Prophets) were sent (with)!"

Not one of the towns (populations), of those which We destroyed, believed before them (though We sent them signs); will they then believe? And We sent not before you (O Muhammad ﷺ) but men to whom We revealed. So ask the people of the Reminder if you do not know.

Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets) 21: 1-7.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 اقْرَبِ لِلنَّاسِ حِلًّا بِطَعْمِهِمْ وَهُمْ فِي عَقْلِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ
 مِنْ ذِكْرِ بَيْنِ رَبِّهِمْ تَعْدِي الْأَسْمَانِ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ لَا هِيَّةَ
 قُلُوبِهِمْ وَالسَّوَادُ الْبَحْرَى الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوا هَذَا الْأَنْبِيَاءُ مِنْكُمْ
 أَفْتَقَرُوا السَّحَرَاءُ أَنْتُمْ تَبْصُرُونَ قَالَ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي
 السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ يَدُ الْوَالِدِ الضَّعِيفَةِ أَهْلًا
 بَلْ أَفْتَرِيهِ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ نَلَيْتَ تَابًا يَدِيكَ أَنْ رَسُلَ الْأَوَّلِينَ
 مَا آمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ أَهْلَكَهَا أَهْلُهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَمَا رَسُلًا
 قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا أَنْزَلْنَاهُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا
 تَعْلَمُونَ وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا أَلْيَا كَلُوتَ الطَّعَامِ وَمَا
 كَانُوا إِلَّا الْبَشَرُ ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَا هُمْ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُمْ وَمَنْ
 نَشَاءُ وَأَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِينَ لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْنَا الْكِتَابَ بِكَافٍ بِهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا
 تَعْقِلُونَ وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قُرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا

قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ فَلَمَّا أَحْسَبُوا أَنَّنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَنْصُرُونَ
 لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَى مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسَاكِينِكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْأَلُونَ قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ فَمَا
 زَالَتْ تِلْكَ دَعْوَاهُمْ خَرَجْنَا عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيدًا خَائِ
 وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا عَجِينَ
 لَوَارِدًا أَنْ نَخْتَلِقَ لَهُوَالِدًا تَابًا مِنْ كُنَّا أَنْ كُنَّا
 فَاعْلَمِينَ بَلْ نَقُفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ لَيْدٌ مَعَهُ
 فَاذًا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مَا تَصِفُونَ
 وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَنْ عِنْدَكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
 عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْسِرُونَ يَسْجُدُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
 لَا يَفْتَرُونَ إِلَّا تَخْنُوعًا وَالْهَمَّةُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ
 لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ
 الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ أَلَيْسَ لَنَا بِمُسْلِمٍ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُمَسْكُونُ



18TH CENTURY CE

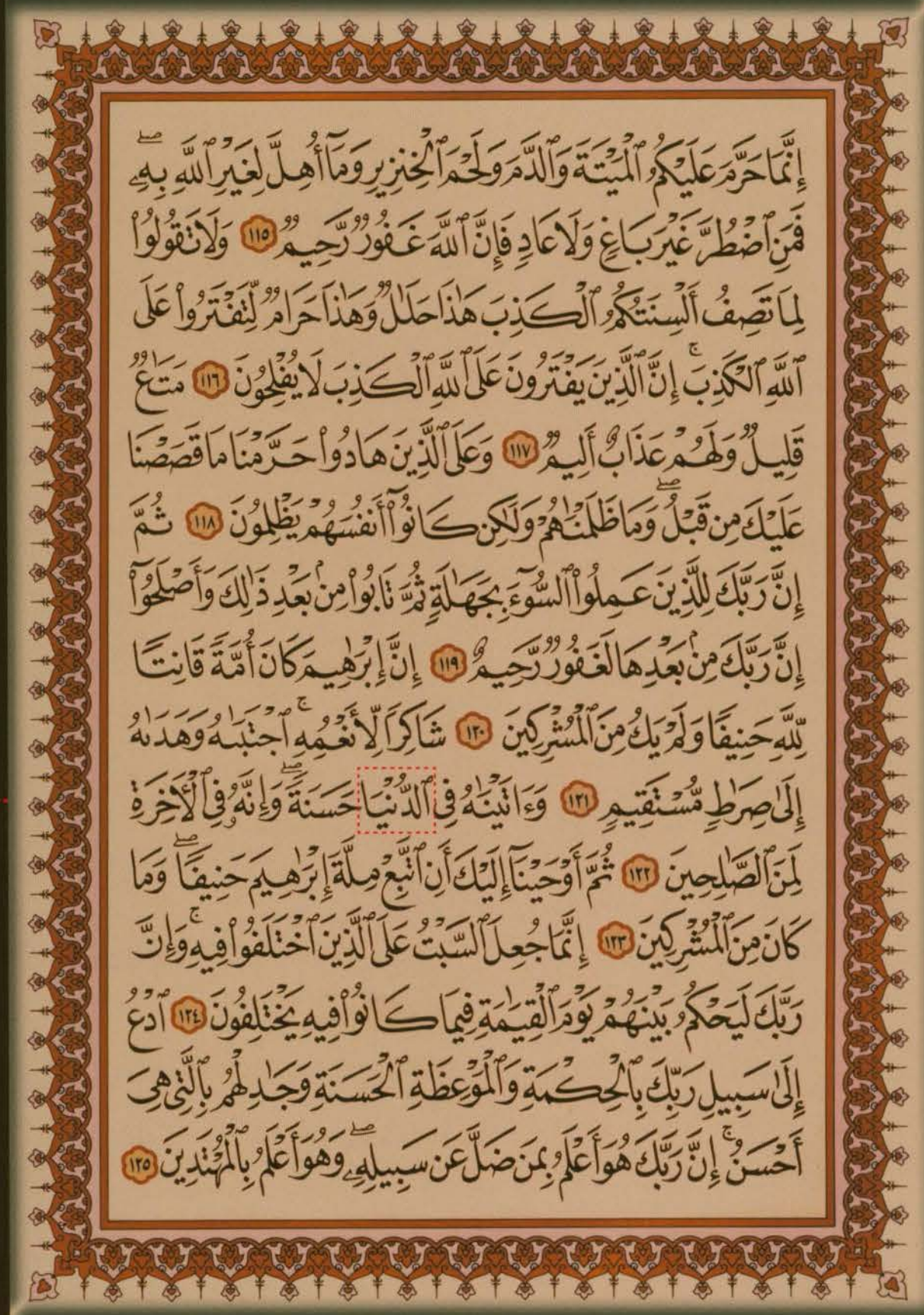
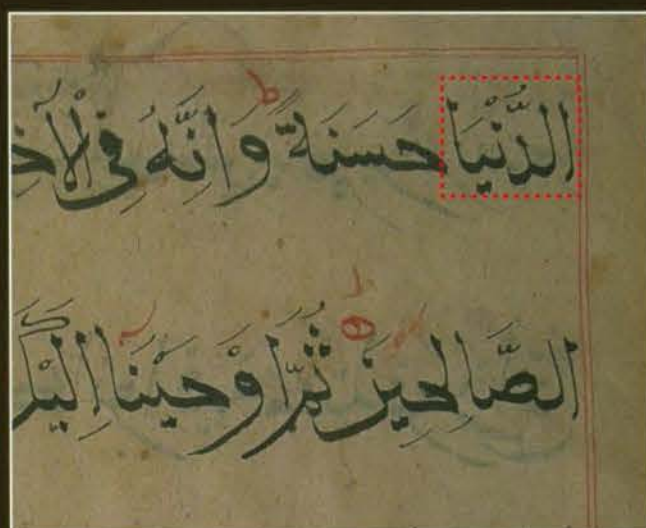
Description: A rare Qur'an leaf from Beijing in China handwritten in a local variant of *naskh* known as *sini* script on handmade paper. The borders are composed of simple lines and there is some use of red ink within the text as well.

Reference: Surah al-Nahl, 16: part of verse 122 to part of verse 124.

Islamic period: 12th century AH.

Origin: Beijing, China.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



Verily, Abraham was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities, or a nation), obedient to Allah, Hanif (i.e. to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikun (disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah). (He was) thankful for His (Allah's) Favours. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a Straight Path (Islamic Monotheism).

And We gave him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he shall be of the righteous. Then, We have sent the Revelation to you (O Muhammad ﷺ): "Follow the religion of Abraham Hanif (Islamic Monotheism) and he was not of those who ascribe partners to Allah.

The Sabbath was only prescribed for those who differed concerning it, and verily, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ. (O Muhammad ﷺ) Invite (mankind) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided.

Surah an-Nahl (The Bee) 16: 120-125.

الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ ثُمَّ رَوَيْتُ عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ
 أَتْبَعَ مِلَّةَ أَبِي رَافِعٍ حَنِيفًا وَ
 مَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ إِنَّمَا جَعَلَ
 السَّبِيحَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ

A rare Qur'an leaf from Beijing in China handwritten in *sini* script on handmade paper.

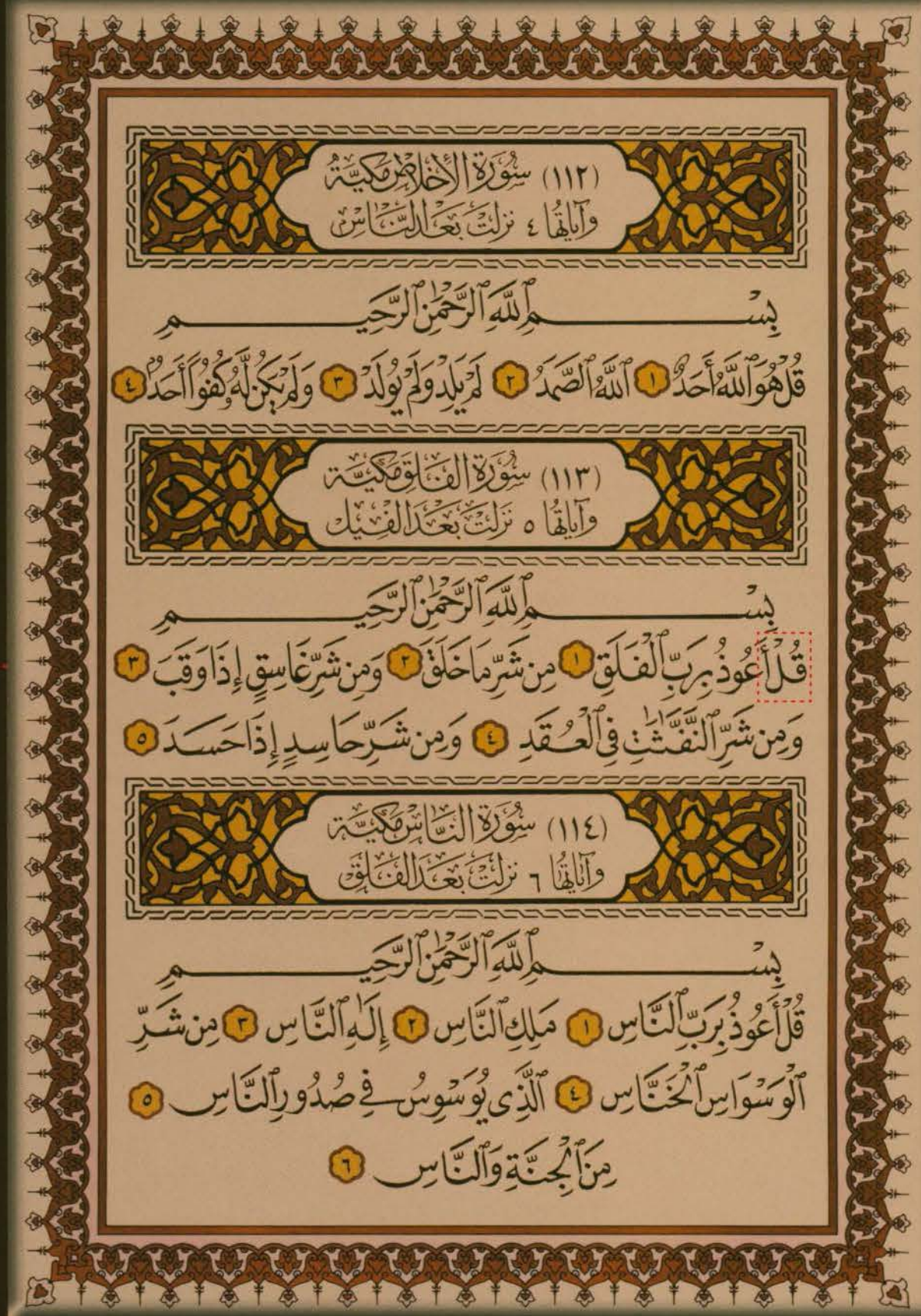
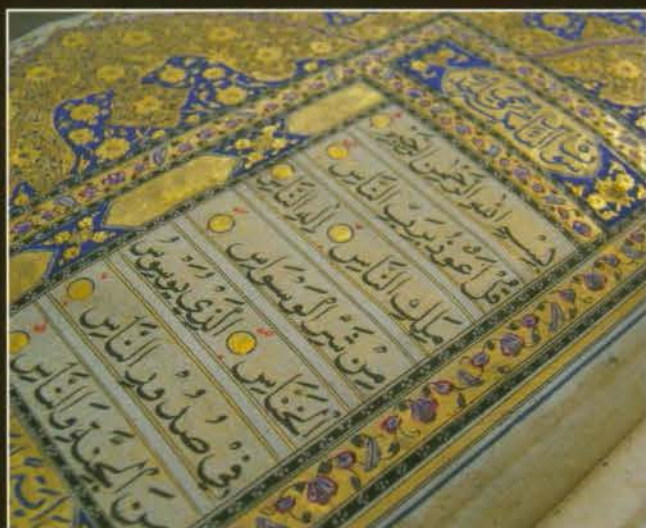
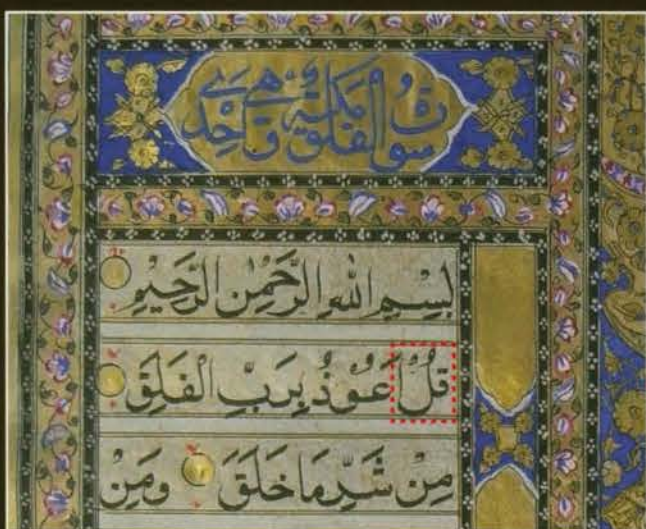
Description: Highly decorated portion of a Qur'an, handwritten in *naskh* script on polished paper. Extensive use of pure gold ink and royal blue colour throughout. Elegantly presented with floral geometric design work using blue and gold inlay.

Reference: Surah al-Falaq, 113 and Surah an-Naas, 114.

Islamic period: 12 century AH.

Origin: Persia.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of the daybreak, From the evil of what He has created, And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away),
And from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots,
And from the evil of the envier when he envies."

Surah al-Falaq (The Daybreak) 113.

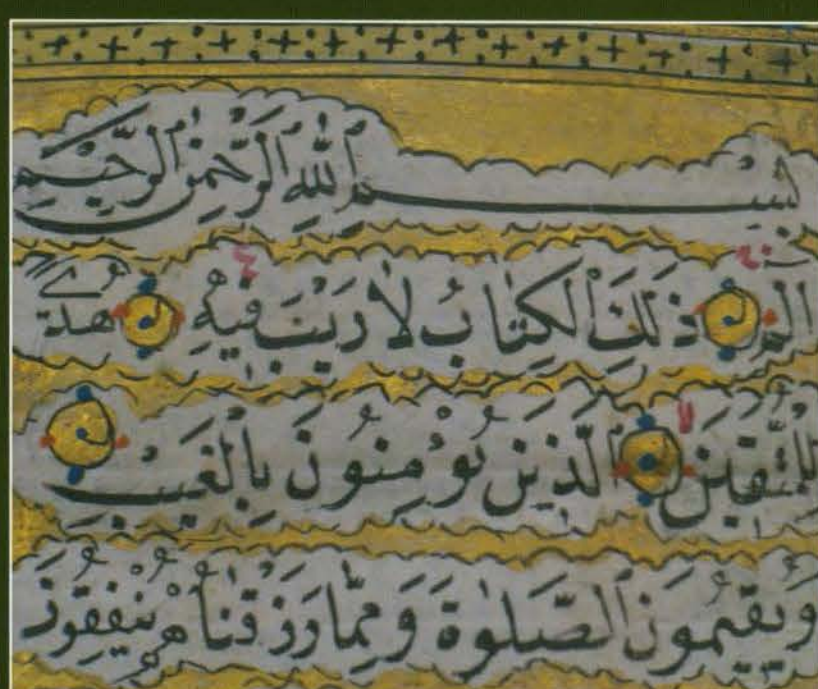
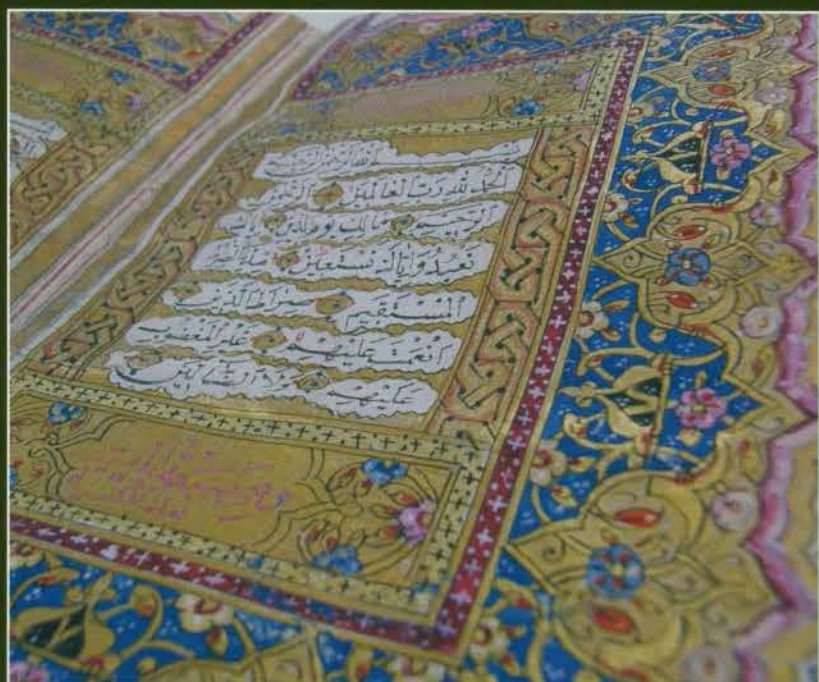
In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind, The King of mankind – The Ilah (God) of mankind, From the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one's heart after one remembers Allah). Who whispers in the breasts of mankind.
Of jinn and men."

Surah an-Naas (Mankind) 114.



Magnificently decorated portion of a Qur'an, handwritten in *naskh* script on polished paper.



19TH CENTURY CE

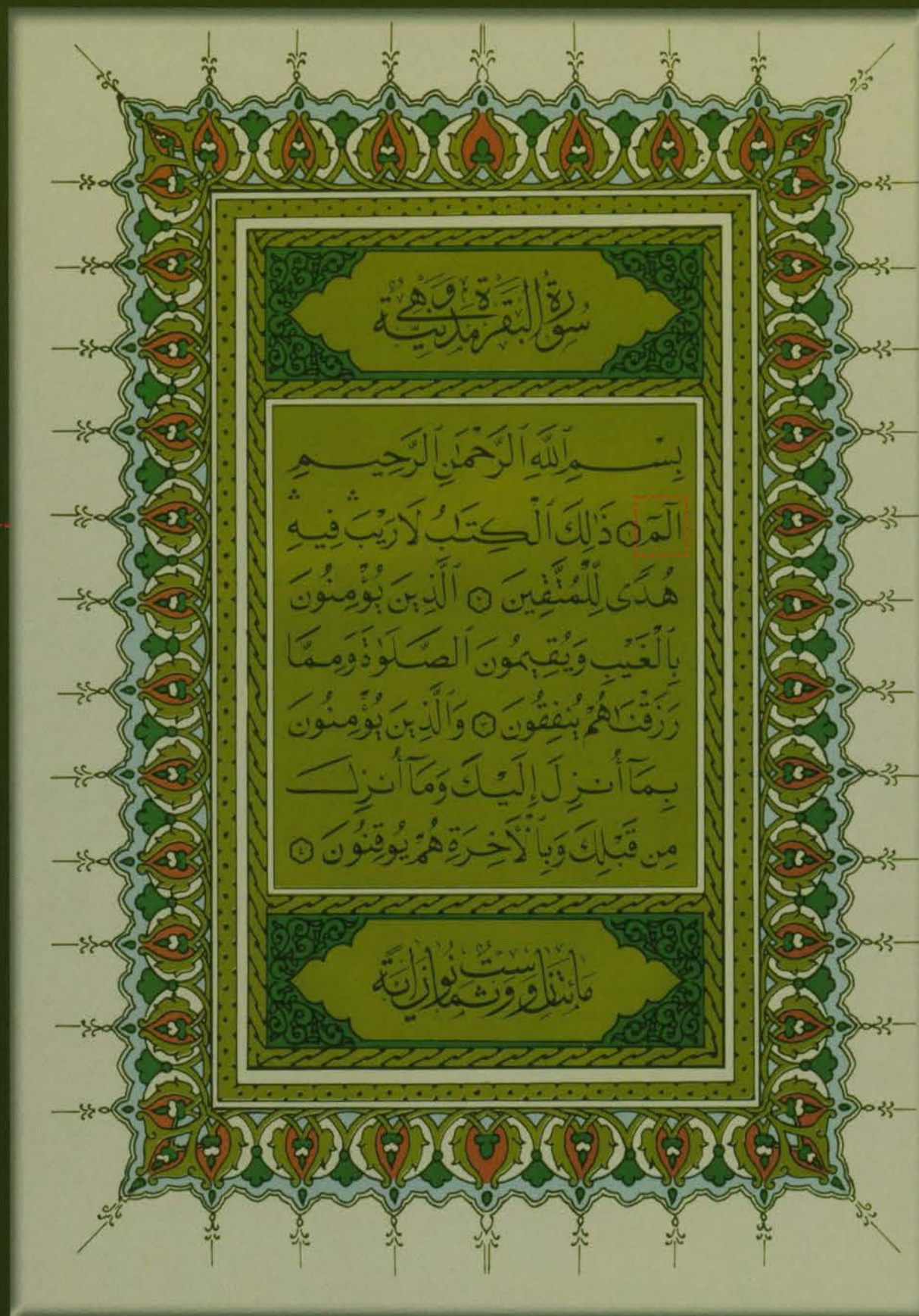
Description: A complete handwritten Qur'an originating from the Ottoman Empire. Highly decorated throughout using precious gold and a variety of colours. Written on polished paper and bound in a leather hardcover with gold insets.

Reference: Surah al-Fatihah, 1 and the start of Surah al-Baqarah, 2.

Islamic period: 13th century AH.

Origin: Ottoman Empire.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Alif-Lam-Mim. This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun [the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much)].

Who believe in the unseen and perform As-Salat (the prayers), and spend out of what We have provided for them [i.e. give Zakat (obligatory charity), spend on themselves, their parents, their children, their wives, and also give charity to the poor and also in Allah's Cause].

And who believe in that (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) which has been sent down (revealed) to you (Muhammad ﷺ) and in that which was sent down before you (the Torah and the Gospel) and they believe with certainty in the Hereafter. (Resurrection, recompense of their good and bad deeds, Paradise and Hell). They are on (true) guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful.

Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 1-5.



Incipit pages from a complete handwritten Qur'an originating from the Ottoman Empire.

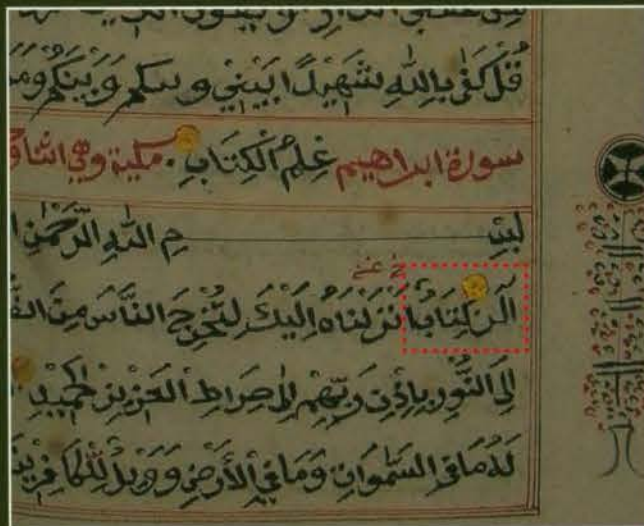
Description: A complete Qur'an written in a variant of *naskh* script. The marginal device on the page has been decorated with a local style. Saffron coloured circular markers denote verse endings.

Reference: Surah ar-Ra'd, 13 (last few verses) and the start of Surah Ibraheem, 14.

Islamic period: 13th century AH.

Origin: Far East, most probably Indonesian.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

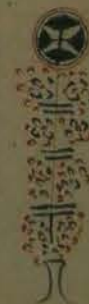
Alif-Lam-Ra. (This is) a Book which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allah and Islamic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all praise.

Allah to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth! And woe to the disbelievers from a severe torment. Those who prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter, and hinder (men) from the path of Allah (i.e. Islam) and seek crookedness therein – they are far astray. And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them. Then Allah misleads whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

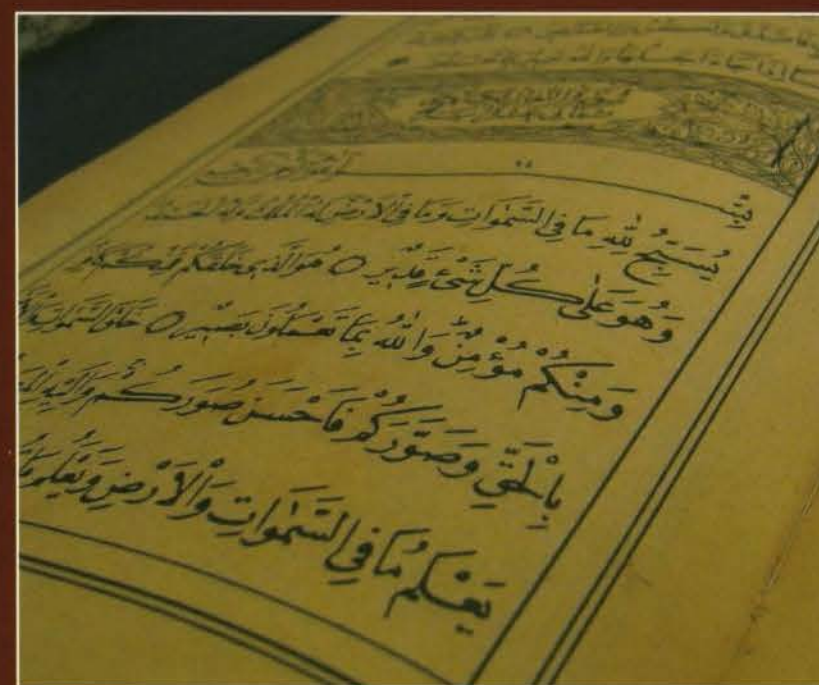
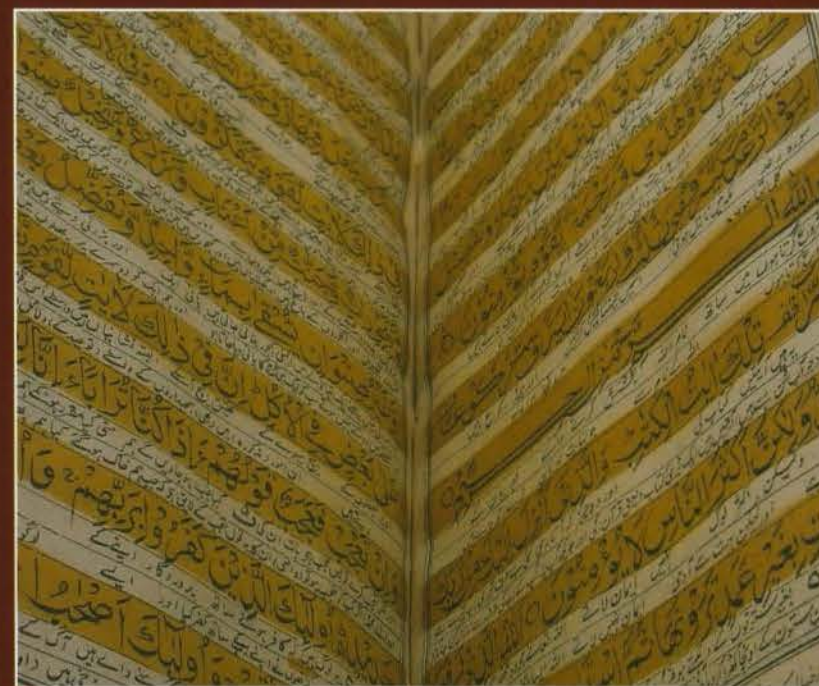
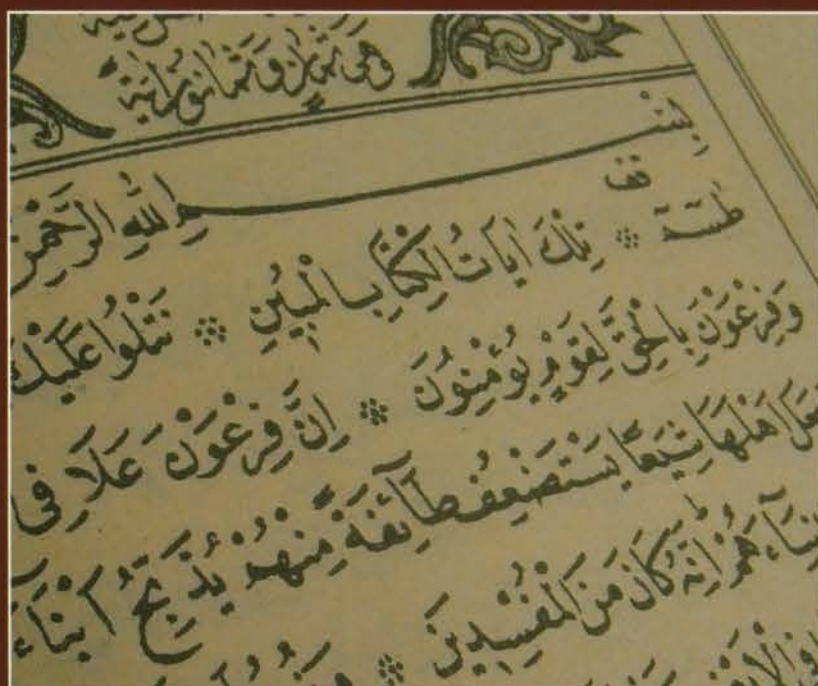
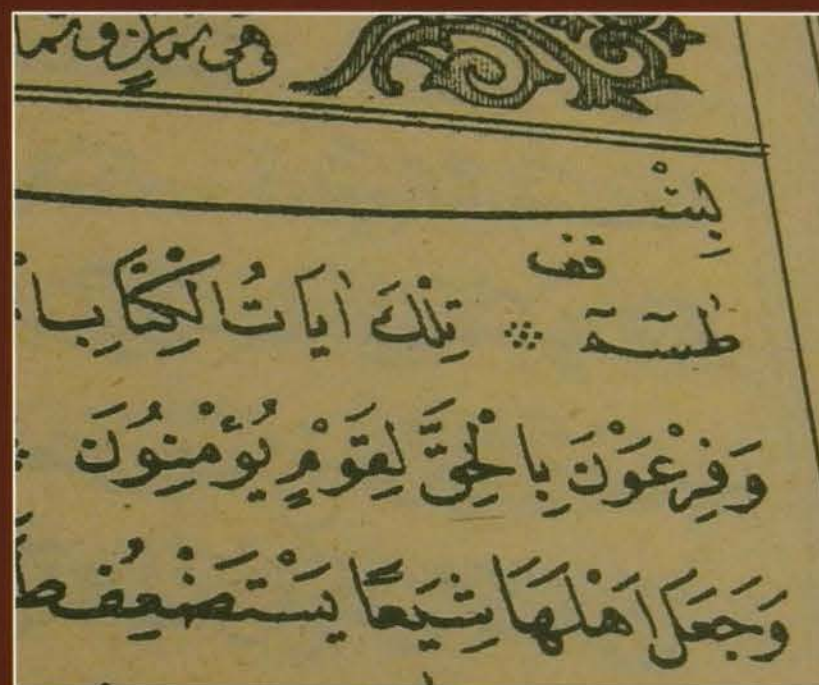
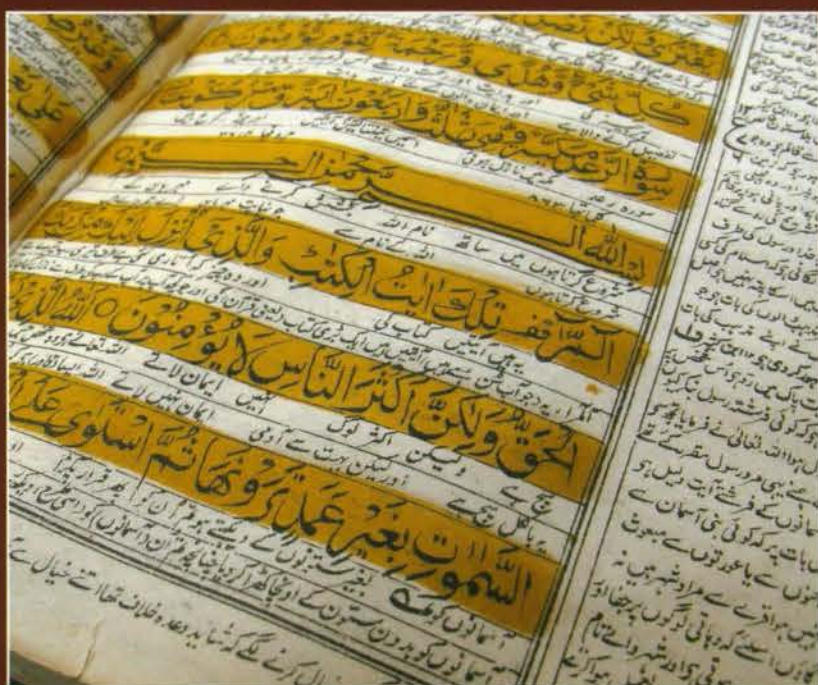
And indeed We sent Musa (Moses) with Our Ayat (signs, proofs, and evidences) (saying): "Bring out your people from darkness into light, and remind them of the Blessings of Allah. Truly, therein are Ayat (evidences, proofs and signs) for every patient, thankful (person)."

Surah Ibraheem (Abraham) 14: 1-5.

جعلناهم أزواجاً ذريةً وما كان لرسول أن
 يأتي بأية إلا بأذن الله لكل أجل كتاب يعجز الله
 ما يشاء ويثبت وعنده أم الكتاب وإن ما تريد
 بعض الذي نعلم أو نتوفيقك فإنما عليك
 البلاغ وعينا حساب أولم ير في الأفان الأرض
 ننقصها من أطرافها والله يحكم لا معقب حكمه
 هو سمع الحساب وقد مكر الذين من قبله فليلك
 المكر جميعاً يعلم ما تكسب كل نفس وسيعلم الكتاب
 لمن عقب الدار ويقول الذين كفروا لئن لم
 نزل الله شهيداً بيني وبينكم ومن عنده
 سورة إبراهيم علم الكتاب ملكاً وانشاء آية
 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 القرآن نزلناه إليك بالحق من ربك
 لا التوراة ولا الإنجيل ولا الفراق من قبل
 لعلنا نعلم ما في الأرض وما في السموات



شديد الذين يستغيثون الحياة الدنيا على الآخرة
 ويصدون عن سبيل الله ويغويونها عباداً أولئك
 في ضلال بعيد وما أرسلنا من قبلك رسول إلا
 بقوله ليبيّن لهم فيضل الله من يشاء ويهدى
 من يشاء وهو العزيز الحكيم ولقد أرسلنا موسى
 بآياتنا أن أخرج قومك من الظلمات إلى النور
 فذكرهم بأيام الله إن في ذلك لآيات لكل صابر
 شكور ولقد قال موسى لقومه اذكروا نعمة الله عليكم
 إذ أنزلنا من السماء ماء فخرج من بين ظهركم
 الأنهار فمن كفر بعد ما نزلت البينات ربكم
 فمن لا يدرى يومئذ لعلهم يسمعون صوت ربهم
 العظيم وإذا تأذنت لكم لعلكم تشكرون لأن يد
 ربكم لعلكم تفرحون إن عدائي لشديد وقال
 موسى إنك تعلم ما نعرف لا نسمع ولا نرى
 إنك تعلم ما نعرف لا نسمع ولا نرى إنك تعلم
 ما نعرف لا نسمع ولا نرى إنك تعلم ما نعرف



20TH CENTURY CE

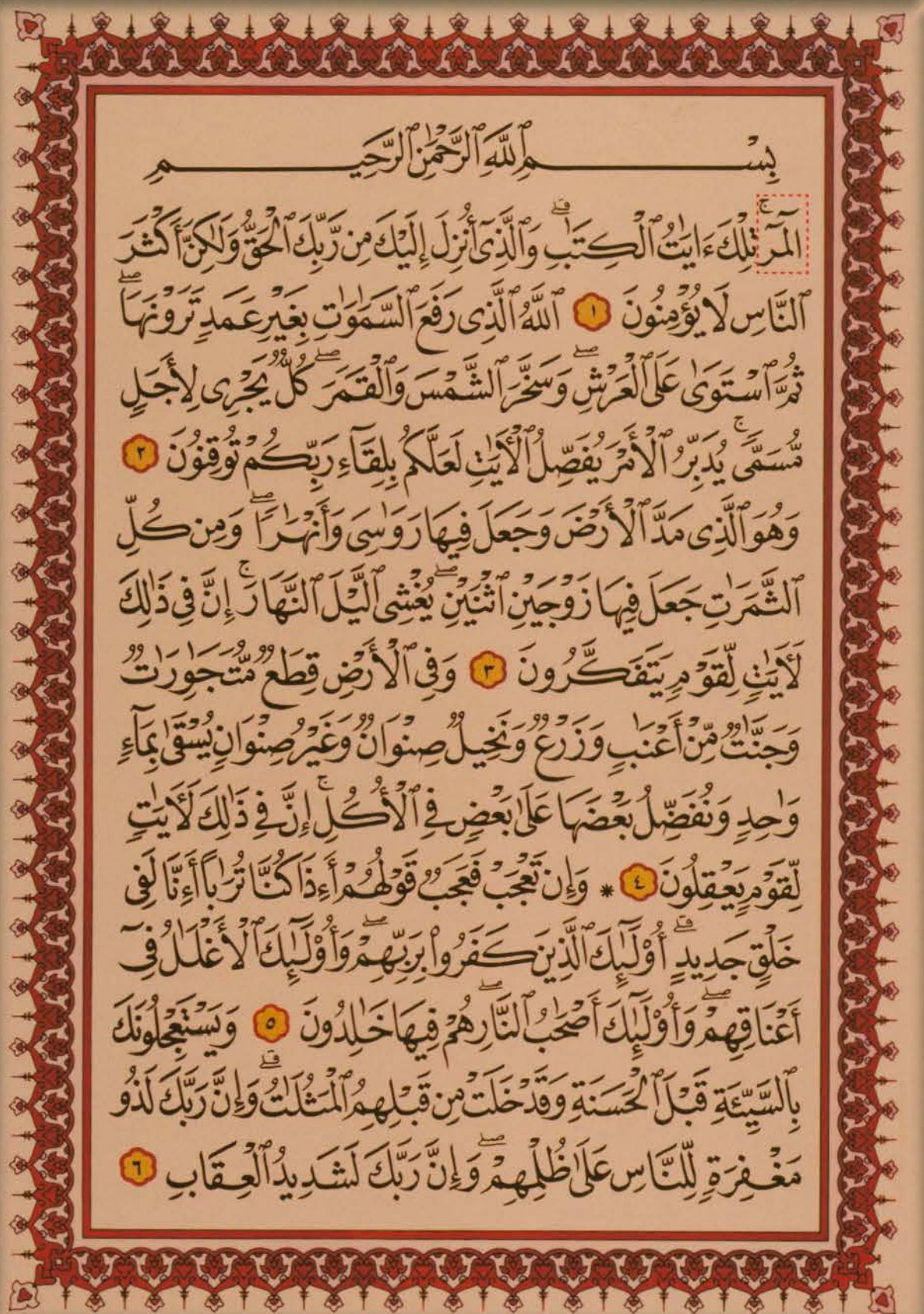
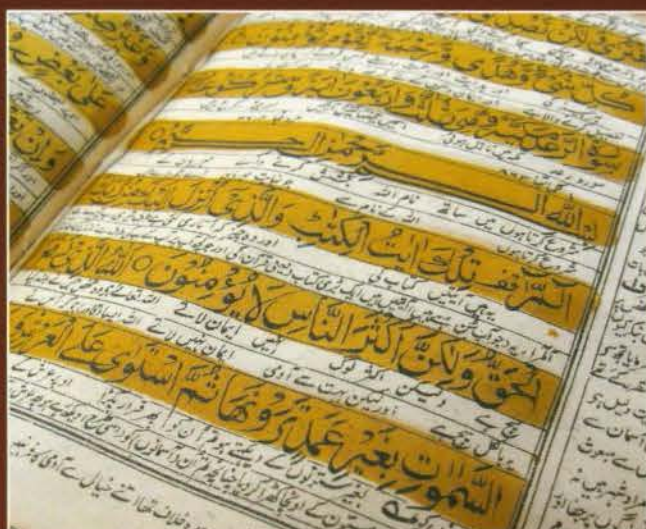
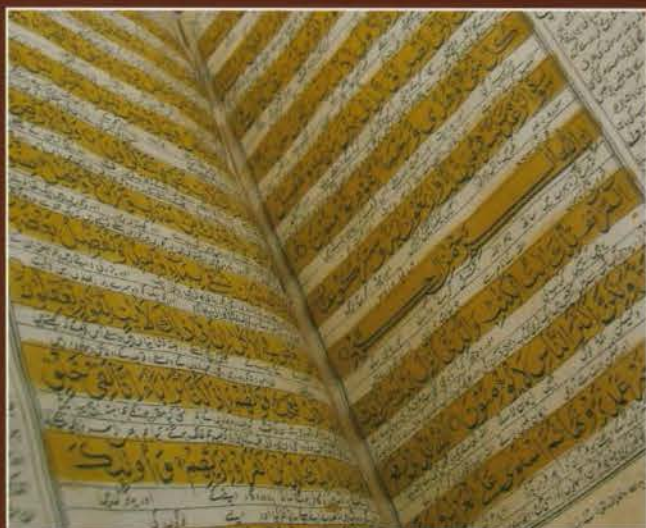
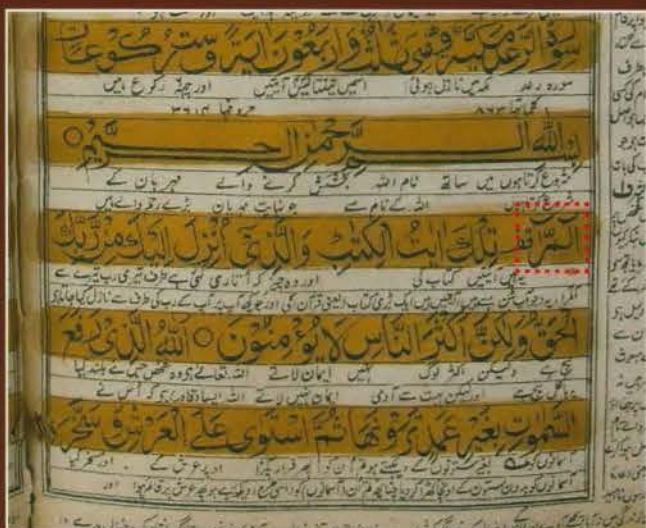
Description: A Qur'an date marked 1926 CE printed in *naskh* style script. There are 11 lines of large Arabic text per page with two lines of interlinear Urdu translation in *nasta'liq* in between, with additional commentary in the margins.

Reference: Surah Yusuf, 12 (last few verses) and the start of Surah ar-Ra'd, 13.

Islamic period: 14th century AH.

Origin: Indian subcontinent.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Alif-Lam-Mim-Ra. These are the Verses of the Book (the Qur'an), and that which has been revealed to you (Muhammad ﷺ) from your Lord is the truth, but most men believe not. Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then, He rose above (Istawa) the Throne. He has set the sun and the moon (on their courses) for a term appointed. He manages and regulates all affairs; He explains the Ayat (verses, lessons, signs, revelations etc.) in detail, that you may believe with certainty in the Meeting with your Lord. And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and rivers and of every kind of fruit He made things in pairs. He brings the night as a cover over the day. Verily, in these things, there are verses for a people who reflect.

And in the earth are neighbouring tracts, and gardens of vines, and green crops (fields), and date palms, growing into two or three from a single stem root, or otherwise (one stem root for every palm), watered with the same water; yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Verily, in these things there are Ayat (evidences, signs) for the people who understand.

Surah ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 1- 4.

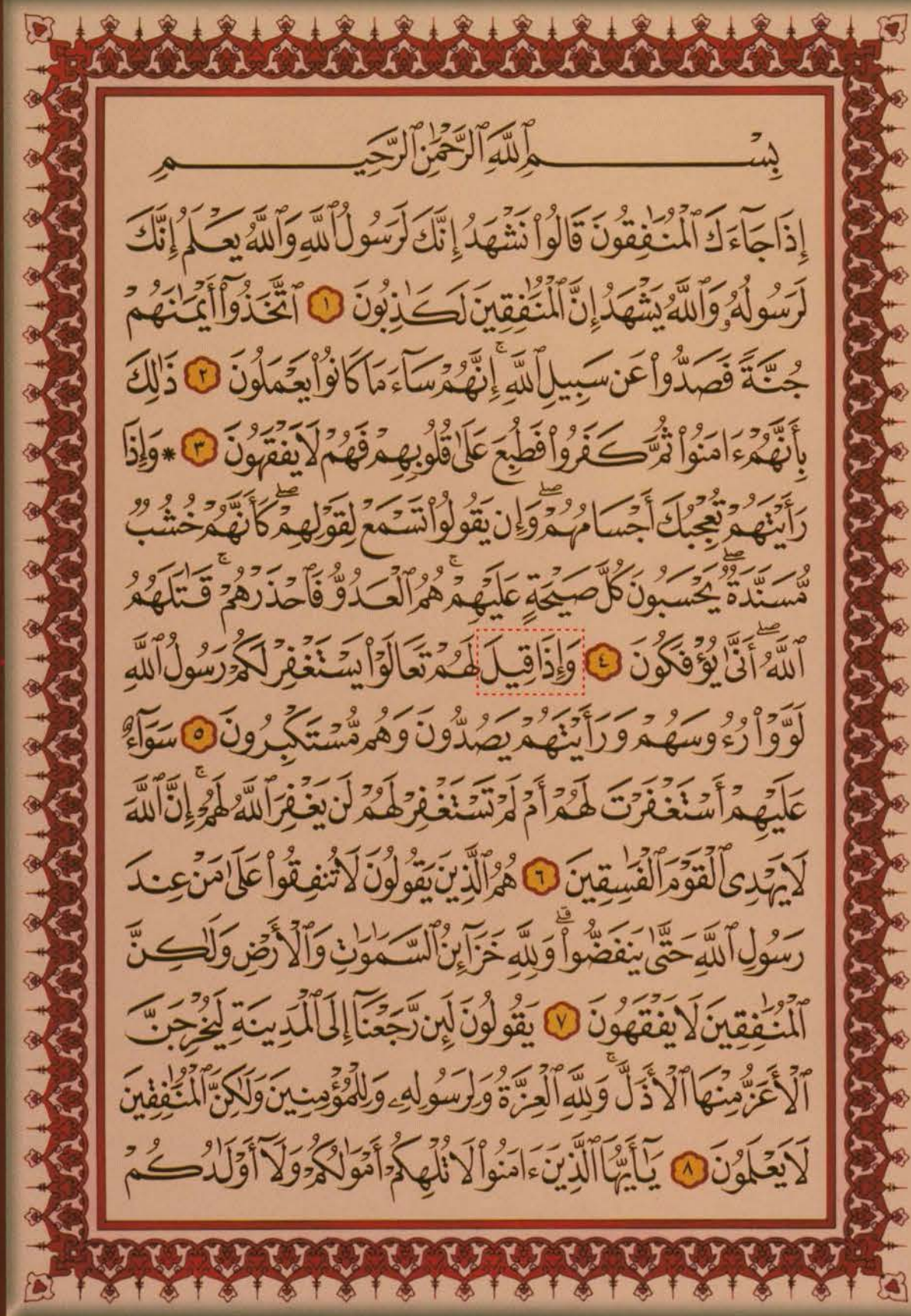
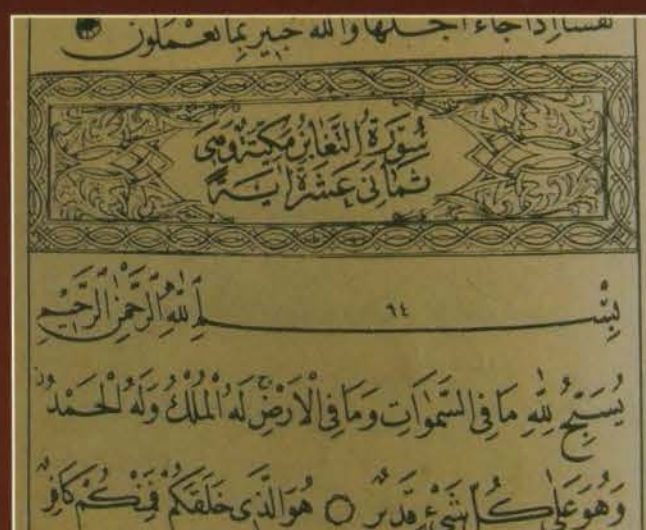
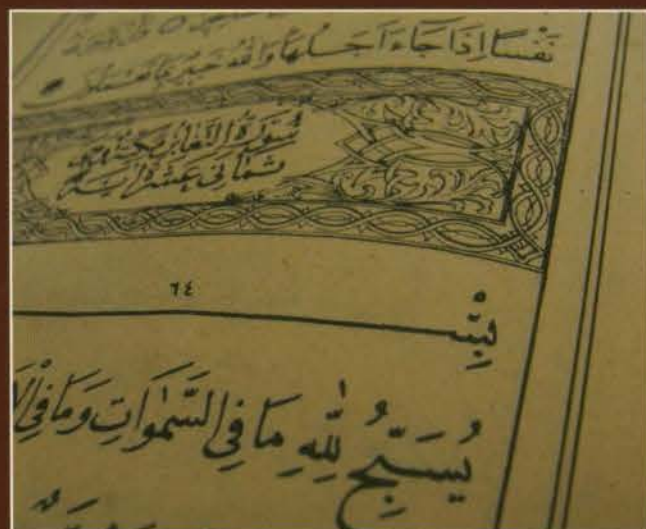
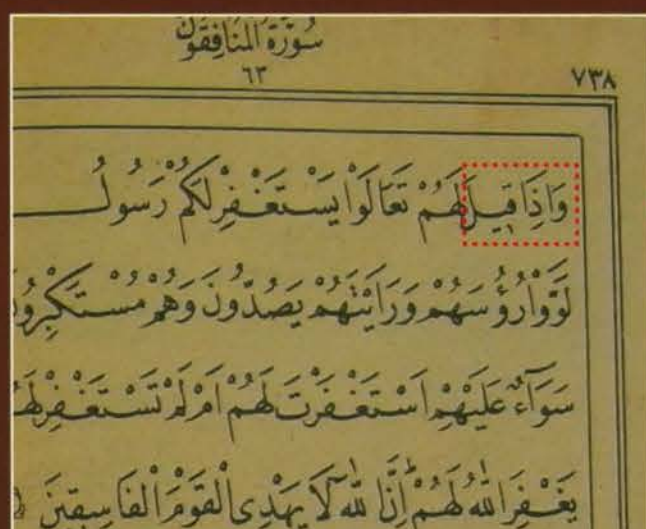
Description: A fine example of a machine printed Qur'an produced in Egypt, with simple surah separators and open circles to mark verse endings. The Qur'an would have been printed from prepared printing blocks such as those shown on pages 400 and 401.

Reference: Surah al-Munaafiqoon, 63 and the start of Surah at-Taghaabun, 64.

Islamic period: 14th century AH.

Origin: Egypt.

Location: Exhibition Islam Collection.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

And when it is said to them: "Come, so that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness from Allah for you," they twist their heads, and you would see them turning away their faces in pride. It is equal to them whether you (Muhammad ﷺ) ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them, Allah will never forgive them. Verily, Allah guides not the people who are the Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah). They are the ones who say: "Spend not on those who are with Allah's Messenger, until they desert him." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not.

They (hypocrites) say: "If we return to Al-Madinah, indeed the more honourable ('Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, the chief of hypocrites at Al-Madinah) will expel therefrom the meaner (i.e. Allah's Messenger)." But honour, power and glory belong to Allah, and to His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), and to the believers, but the hypocrites know not. O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers.

Surah al-Munaafiqoon (The Hypocrites) 63: 5-9.

سُورَةُ النَّافِثَةِ

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وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
لَوَارُؤُ سَهُمْ وَرَأَيْنَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ○
سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ
يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ○ هُمُ
الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تَنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُوا
وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ○ يَقُولُونَ لَنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ
أَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَاؤُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ○ وَانْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

مِنْ قَبْلِ

سُورَةُ النَّافِثَةِ

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مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى أَجَلٍ
قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ○ وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ
نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ○

سُورَةُ النَّافِثَةِ
ثَمَانِي عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ○ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ
وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ○ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ○
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَلَمْ يَكُنْ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ
مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ
عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

The Qur'an in Print

Most of the Qur'ans in use today are printed copies based on the standard reference Qur'an commissioned by Caliph Uthman ibn Affan as described previously. There are many prints, large and small, elaborate or plain, expensive or inexpensive, yet they all retain the same Arabic text that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Some are bilingual forms with the Arabic on one side and a translation of the meaning into another language on the other. The Qur'an is also available in many different sizes. Most are of a reasonable book size, but there exist extremely large format Qur'ans usually for display purposes and very small Qur'ans that are often carried when travelling. The complete Qur'an has also been laser etched onto business card sized sheets of plastic.

As early as the 10th century the Qur'an was being printed from carved wooden blocks using one block per page. The pattern of writing and printing of the Qur'an was further standardised when the printing press with movable type was first used in Europe. The oldest surviving Qur'an using this movable type of press was printed in Venice between 1537 and 1538 CE. In 1694 CE, a Qur'an was printed by Abraham Hinkellmann in Hamburg, Germany, but it contained major printing errors on almost every page.

The first Qur'an printed by Muslims was in St Petersburg, Russia, in 1787 CE. These were followed by further editions from Kazan (1828 CE), Persia (1833 CE), Cairo (1890 CE), as well as Istanbul (1877 CE). An Egyptian standardised version of the Qur'anic text was first printed in Cairo in 1925 under supervision of scholars from al-Azhar University.¹ Qur'ans were also being widely printed in Turkey that combined handwritten beautifully illuminated text with modern offset printing technology.

The Qur'an has also been printed in Arabic braille as well as a translation of the meaning in English Braille. A very well-known and common print of the Qur'an is the Madinah *mushaf*. This *mushaf* adopts the *hafs qiraa*, which is the most common mode of recitation in the Islamic World. Another mode of recitation is known as *warsh*. This style of recitation is common to much of Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Nigeria and Malaysia. Whereas, almost all of the printed copies of the Qur'an today adopt the *naskh* style of script, those that adopt the *warsh qiraa* are typically printed in *maghribi* style script, which can be difficult to read for the untrained eye. For example, the letter *qaf* is usually written with two dots above it, however in *maghribi* script there is only one dot, whereas the letter *faa* has one dot below it rather than above as in the *naskh* script. The other less common modes are *Qaloon* (Libya, Tunisia and parts of Qatar), *ad-Doree* (parts of Sudan and West Africa) and *Ibn 'Amir* (parts of Yemen). A full explanation of the different modes of Qur'anic recitation can be found in 'An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'aan'.²

A final point to note here is that although over the centuries Muslims have tended to beautify and highly decorate Qur'anic manuscripts (and mosques), this was not necessarily a practice that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged. On the contrary there is even a saying of his that seems to discourage this;

"When you decorate your mosques, and beautify your *mushafs*, then destruction will be upon you!"³



Opposite
Early 20th century Qur'an, machine printed in the Ottoman Empire with extensive decoration similar to many late hand written manuscripts. The page is open at the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2). The text does not have any verse numbering, small flower shapes have been used as verse separators.



Above

Qur'an sections (juz') from a late 19th century 30 volume Qur'an printed in the Middle East. The start of Surah an-Noor (The Light, 24) is shown on the right hand page.

Opposite

Opening pages from an Ottoman Qur'an printed during the early part of the 20th century.

سورة التوحيد
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي جعل
الدين الاسلام
مالية يوم الدين
وما لايك تسخير
غيبه وآياتك تستخير
هذنا الصراط المستقيم
صراط الذين انعمت عليهم
ولا الضالين ولا الضالين
المغضوب عليهم

ملكية وهي سبع ايات

سورة التوحيد
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي جعل
الدين الاسلام
مالية يوم الدين
وما لايك تسخير
غيبه وآياتك تستخير
هذنا الصراط المستقيم
صراط الذين انعمت عليهم
ولا الضالين ولا الضالين
المغضوب عليهم

وهي سبع ايات

[illegible]



Above and opposite

Early 20th century Ottoman Qur'ans extensively decorated in gold colour. Each page is numbered and is set within a multi-lined border. Surah headers are within a traditional floral design and small floral devices act as verse numbers. Some of the pages also have marginal devices. The top image has the end of Surah al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage, 22) and the start of Surah al-Muminoon (The Believers, 23). The lower image shows Surahs al-Asr (The Time, 103), al-Humazah (The Slanderer, 104), al-Feel (The Elephant, 105), Quraysh (106), al-Maa'oon (The Small Kindnesses, 107), al-Kawthar (A River in Paradise, 108) and the start of Surah al-Kaafiroon (The Disbelievers, 109). The image on the opposite page shows the start of Surah al-Alaq (The Clot, 96).

سُورَةُ الْكَافِ

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النَّاسِ عَلَى مَكْتٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ نَزِيلًا ۝ قُلْ آمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلَّهِ ذُقَانٍ مُجَدًّا ۝
 وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَنَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا مَفْعُولًا ۝ وَيَخِرُّونَ
 لِلَّهِ ذُقَانٍ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ۝ قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ
 أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا بِصَلَاتِكُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُوهَا
 وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
 شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذَّلِيلِ وَكَبِيرُهُ تَكْبِيرًا ۝



(١٨) سُورَةُ الْكَافِ مَكِّيَّةٌ
 الْآيَةُ ٢٨ وَمِنْ آيَةِ ٨٢ إِلَى غَايَةِ آيَةِ ١٠١ فَهَذِهِ
 وَأَيَّانَهَا ١١٠ نَزَلَتْ بَعْدَ الْغَاشِيَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ۝
 قَيِّمًا لِنُذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا لِمَنْ لَدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
 الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۝ مَّا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ۝ وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ
 قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۝ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً
 تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ۝ فَلَعَلَّكَ بِخُحِّ نَفْسِكَ



Printed Qur'an from the 1930's with pages open on Surah's al-Isra (The Night Journey, 17) and al-Kahf (The Cave, 18). Mass printing of Qur'ans only really started after the 1850's, first in Egypt and then in Turkey. The verses are numbered in this Qur'an and there is a marginal device in the upper left hand margin, functionally placed to inform the reader to prostrate during recitation.



وَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ إِنَّهُ وَكَانَ عِبَادِهِ خَيْرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَمُهْتَدٍ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۖ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى
وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمِمًا وَبُكْمًا وَصُمًّا مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ
سَعِيرًا ﴿٩٩﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ هُمُ بَأْنَهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا
عِظْمًا وَرُفَاتًا أَيْنَا النَّبْعُوتُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا
لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَإِنَّ الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿١٠١﴾ قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ
خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ
قَنُورًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَنَسِيَ لِسْرَءِيلَ
إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَمُوسَىٰ مَسْحُورًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ
عَلِمْتُ مَا أَنْزَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَآئِرٍ وَإِنِّي
لَأَظُنُّكَ يَفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُورًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْفِرَ هُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ
وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَقُلْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ
فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرِ فُجِّنَا بِكُمْ لَيْفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَّلَهُ
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَفَرَأَيْنَا فَتْرَتَهُ لِفَتْرَاهُ عَلَى

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ
 لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ جَمِيدٌ ۝ وَكَذَقَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ
 وَهُوَ يَعْظُمُ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝
 وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا وَاللَّهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَذَا عَلَى
 وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى
 الْمَصِيرِ ۝ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
 فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبِجْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ
 مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝
 يَا بَنِيَّ إِنِّي أَخَذْتُكِ مِنَ خُرْدٍ فَتَكُنُنَّ فِي صَفْوَةٍ
 أَوْ فِي السَّمَكِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يَابِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ
 خَبِيرٌ ۝ يَا بَنِيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَآمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَنْعَنِ لِلنَّكَرِ
 وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ۝ وَلَا
 تُصَغِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ۝ وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ
 مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ۝

An example of an early 20th century Qur'an printed in the Ottoman empire. The pages are numbered but note the lack of verse numbers with a small floral motif used instead (Surah Luqmaan 31: 1-11).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ مِنْ أَقْبَامِ الْكُتُبِ الْحَكِيمِ * هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِلْحَسَنِينَ * الَّذِينَ
يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ *
أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ * وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا
هُزُوًا ۗ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ * وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَتَأْتِيهِ
مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَانَتْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا فَبَسَّ بِعَذَابِ
الْيَوْمِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَسْنَوْا وَعَمَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ *
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَكِيمُ * خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرْوُنَهَا ۚ وَالْقِيَامُ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِي أَنْ تُمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ۖ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ * هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۚ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ *

وَلَقَدْ

A Qur'an printed in Tartarstan by Qazan University (Asyastkoy Press) in 1848 CE. This unique Qur'an has 482 pages and is fully leather bound. The pages are numbered but there is no verse numbering. There is extensive commentary in the margins. The right hand page has the last part of Surah al-Anbiyaa (The Prophets, 21) and the left hand side shows the start of Surah al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage, 22).

قرا حمزة والكساي سكرى
وما هم بسكرى على وزن
فعلى وقرا الباقر بالالف
سكرى على وزن فعلى

وان الله يبعث من فى القبور
وقف تام على طريقة ابو عمرو
الداني ولا خلاف فى ذلك

قرا ابن كثير وابو عمرو
ليضل بفتح الباء وقرا الباقر
بضم الباء وقد ذكر فى سورة
ابراهيم عليه السلام

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
يا ايها الناس اتقوا ربكم ان زلزلت الساعة شي عظيم يوم
نرونها تذهل كل مرضعة عما أرضعت وتضع كل ذات حمل
حملها وترى الناس سكارى وما هم بسكارى ولكن عذاب
الله شديد ومن الناس من يجادل فى الله بغير علم ويتبع
كل شيطان مريد كتب عليه انه من تولاه فانه يضلوه ويهديه
الى عذاب السعير يا ايها الناس ان كنتم فى ريب من البعث
فانا خلقناكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم من علقة ثم من مضغة
مخلقة وغير مخلقة لنبين لكم ونقر فى الارحام ما نشاء الى
اجل مسمى ثم نخرجكم طفلا ثم لتبلغوا اشدكم ومنكم من
يتوفى ومنكم من يرد الى ارضه ليعلم من بعد
علم شيا وترى الارض هامدة فاذا انزلنا عليها الماء اهتزت
وربت وانبتت من كل زوج بهيج ذلك بان الله هو الحق
وانه يحيى الموتى وانه على كل شي قدير وان الساعة آتية
لا ريب فيها وان الله يبعث من فى القبور ومن الناس من
يجادل فى الله بغير علم ولا هدى ولا كتاب منير ثانيا عطفه
ليضل عن سبيل الله له فى الدنيا خزي ونذيقه يوم القيامة عذاب

يا ويلنا قد كنا في غفلة من هذا بل كنا ظالمين ﴿١﴾ انكم وما
 تعبدون من دون الله حصب جهنم انتم لها واردون ﴿٢﴾ لو كان
 هو الا الهة ما وردوها وكل فيها خالدون ﴿٣﴾ لهم فيها أزواج
 مطهرة وهم فيها لا يسمعون ﴿٤﴾ ان الذين سبقوا لهم من الحسن
 اولئك عنها مبعدون ﴿٥﴾ لا يسمعون حسيسها وهم فيها لا يسمعون
 انفسهم خالدون ﴿٦﴾ لا يحزنهم الفزع الاكبر وتلقيهم الملائكة
 هذا يومكم الذي كنتم توعدون ﴿٧﴾ يوم نطوى السماء
 كطي السجل للكتب كما بدأنا اول خلق نعيده وعدا علينا
 انا كنا فاعلين ﴿٨﴾ ولقد كتبنا في الزبور من بعد الذكر
 ان الارض يرثها عبادي الصالحون ﴿٩﴾ ان في هذا البلاء لقوم
 عابدين ﴿١٠﴾ وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين ﴿١١﴾ قل انما يوحى
 الى انما الهكم اله واحد فهل انتم مسلمون ﴿١٢﴾ فان تولوا
 فقل اذنتكم على سواء وان ادري اقريب ام بعيد ما توعدون ﴿١٣﴾
 انه يعلم الجهر من القول ويعلم ما تكتمون ﴿١٤﴾ وان ادري
 لعله فتنة لكم ومتاع الى حين ﴿١٥﴾ قال رب احكم بالحق وربنا
 الرحمن المستعان على ما تصفون ﴿١٦﴾

سورة الحج ثمان وسبعون آية

قرا حفص وحيزة والكساي
 للكتب على الجمع وقرا الباقر
 للكتاب على التوحيد

قرا حمزة الزبور بضم الزاي
 والباقر قرأ وافتح الزاي

يا آتيا اربع يا آت من معي
 فتحها حفص اني اله فتحها نافع
 وابوعمر ومسنى الضر وعبادي
 الصالحون سكنها حمزة

قرا حفص قال رب احكم بالالف
 وقرا الباقر قل بغير الالف

وكلام هذه السورة الف
 ومائتان واحد وتسعون
 كلمة وحروفها خمسة الالف
 ومائة وخمسة وسبعون حرفا

تَذَكَّرُونَ ۳ وَكَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا أَوْ

دھیان کرتے ہوئے اور کتنی بستیوں ہم نے کھیا دیں، کہ پہنچا ان پر ہمارا عذاب رات یا

هُم قَائِلُونَ ۴ فَبَاكَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ

دوہرہ کو سوتے تھے پھر یہی تھی ان کی پکار، جب پہنچا ان پر ہمارا عذاب کہ

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ۵ فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَ

کہنے لگے ہم تھے گنہگار تھے سو ہم کو پوچھنا ہے ان سے، جن پاس رسول بھیجے تھے، اور

لَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۶ فَلَنَقْضُنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَ مَا كُنَّا

ہم کو پوچھنا ہے رسولوں سے - پھر ہم احوال سنا دیں گے ان کو، اپنے علم سے، اور ہم

غَافِلِينَ ۷ وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ ۸ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

کیں غائب تھے اور تول اس دن ٹھیک ہے - پھر جس کی تولیں بھاری پڑیں،

فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۹ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ

سو وہی ہیں جن کا بھلا ہوا ہے اور جس کی تولیں ہلکی پڑیں، سو وہی ہیں

الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ۱۰ وَ

جو ہارے اپنی جان، اس پر کہ ہماری آیتوں سے زبردستی کرتے تھے وہ

لَقَدْ مَكَّانَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۱۱ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا

اور ہم نے تم کو جگہ دی زمین میں، اور بنادیں اس میں تم کو روزیاں - تم محفوظ

مَا تَشْكُرُونَ ۱۲ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا

شکر کرتے ہوئے اور ہم نے تم کو پیدا کیا، پھر صورت دی، پھر کہا

لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۱۳ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ

فرشتوں کو، سجدہ کرو آدم کو، تو سجدہ کیا مگر ابلیس - نہ تھا سجدہ

السَّاجِدِينَ ۱۴ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ آلَا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ ۱۵ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ

والوں میں تھے کہا تجھ کو کیا مانع تھا کہ سجدہ نہ کیا، جب میں نے فرمایا؟ بولا، میں اس

مِنْهُ ۱۶ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ۱۷ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ

سے بہتر ہوں - مجھ کو تو نے بنایا آگ سے، اور اس کو بنایا خاک سے تھے کہا تو اتر

مَنْزِلَ ۲

ف
ہر شخص کے عمل کچھ
جالتے ہیں موافق وزن
کے وہی کام ہے کہ صدق
سے اور محبت سے موافق
حکم کیا اور بر محل کیا تو
اس کا وزن بڑھ گیا اور
دکھا دے کو یار پس کو
کیا یا موافق حکم نہ کیا یا
ٹھکانے پر نہ کیا تو وزن
گھٹ گیا - آخرت میں وہ
کاغذ تولیں گے - جس کے
نیک کام بھاری ہونے
تو برے کام بخشنے گئے اور
ہلکے ہونے تو پیرا گیا

ع
۸

Mid-20th century printed Qur'an from the Indian Subcontinent (personal copy of the late Rashida Begum Alam). There are 12 lines of large black naskh script against an orange background with white panels containing an Urdu translation.

The Qur'an also features additional commentary in the margins. The right hand page has the starting of Surah al-A'raaf (The Heights, 7).

مَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۝ وَ

میرا جینا اور مرنا اللہ کی طرف ہے، جو صاحبِ سارے جہان کا ہے کوئی نہیں اس کا شریک، اور

بِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝ قُلْ أَغْيَرُ اللّٰهَ

یہی مجھ کو حکم ہوا، اور میں سب سے پہلے حکم بردار ہوں ۝ تو کہہ، اب میں سوا اللہ کے کون

أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۝ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ

کسوں کوئی رب؛ اور وہی ہے رب ہر چیز کا۔ اور جو کوئی کماوے سو اس کے

إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا ۝ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۝ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ

ذمہ پیر۔ اور بوجھ نہ اٹھاوے گا ایک شخص دوسرے کا۔ پھر تمہارے رب پاس

مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝ وَهُوَ

ہے رجوع تمہاری، سو وہ بتا دے گا، جس بات میں تم جھگڑتے تھے ۝ اور اسی

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلِيفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ

نے تم کو کیا ہے نائب زمین میں، اور بلند کئے تم میں درجے ایک کے

دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ ۝ إِنَّ سَرَّكَ سَرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

ایک پر، کہ آزمائے تم کو اپنے دینے حکم میں۔ تیرا رب شتاب کرتا ہے عذاب،

وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

اور وہ بخشنے والا مہربان ہے ۝

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ۝

سورۃ اعراف کی ہے اور اس میں ۲۰۶ شروع اللہ کے نام سے بخشنے والا مہربان ۝ آیتیں اور ۲۴ رکوع ہیں

الْمَصَّ ۝ كَتَبْنَاكَ اِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ

یہ کتاب اتنی ہے تجھ کو، سو اس سے تیرا جی نہ رُکے کہ

مِنْهُ لِيُنْذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ اتَّبِعُوا مَا اُنْزِلَ

خبردار کر دے تو اس سے، اور نصیحت ہو ایمان والوں کو ۝ چلو اسی پر، جو اُترا

اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ اَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا

تم کو تمہارے رب سے، اور نہ چلو اس کے سوا اور رفیقوں کے پیچھے، تم کم

لَتَعْدِيَنَّهُمْ سَبِيلَنَا ط وَان
الله ط الحسنة



بِسْمِ الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحج ط عَلَيَّتِ الرُّومُ فِي الْاَحْيَا

الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ

عَلَيْهِمْ سَيَخْلِفُونَ ط

جَمْعُ سَيِّئٍ ط الله الامم من

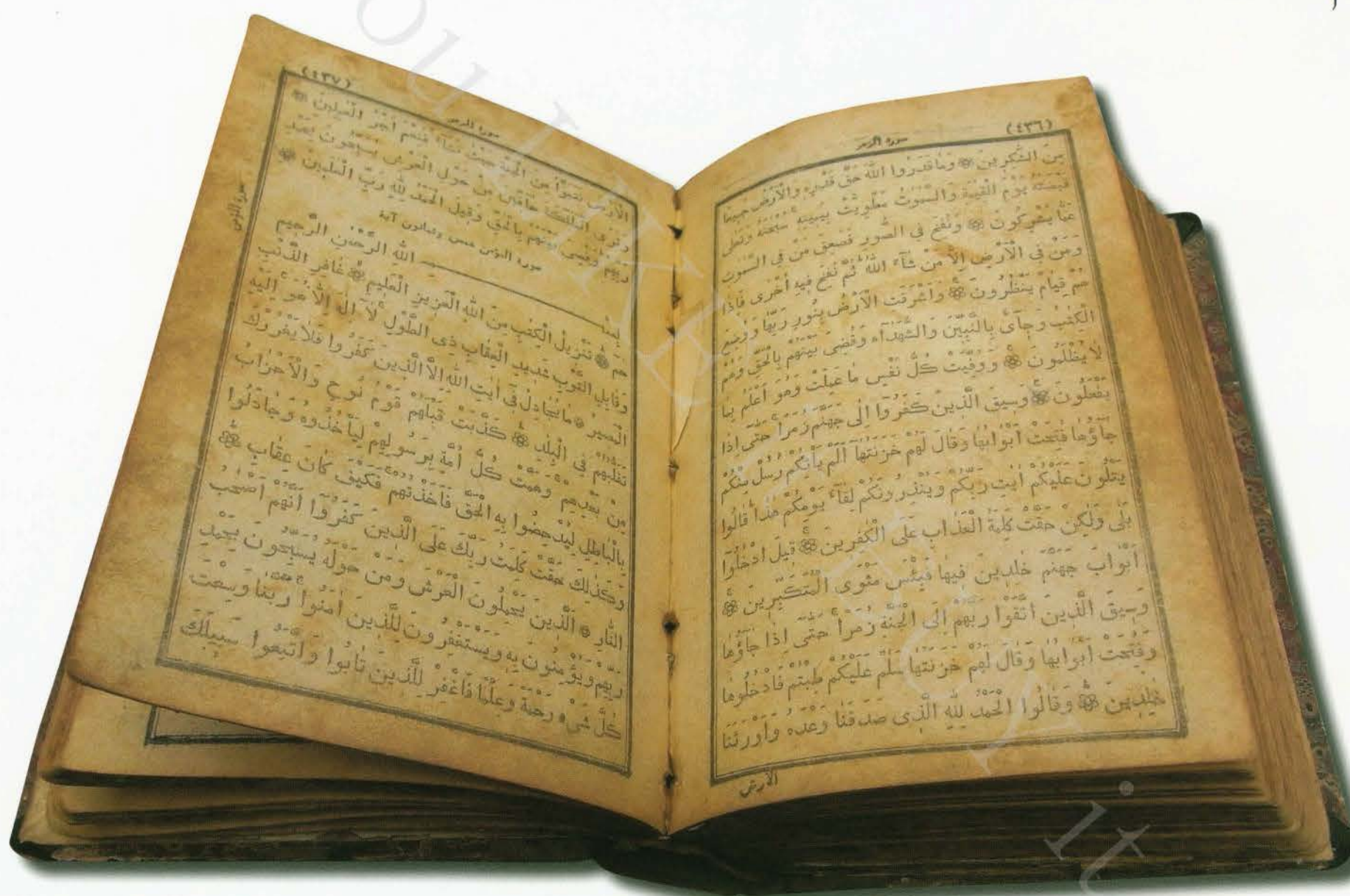
وَمِنْ بَعْدِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ

تُفْدَحُ الْكُوفَةُ ط

الله ط مِنْ سَبِيلِ ط وَهُوَ



The Qur'an Gallery



Above

Complete leather bound Qur'an printed in Tartarstan dated 1917 CE. The pages are open on the last part of Surah az-Zumar (The Groups, 39) and the start of Surah Ghaafir (The Forgiver, 40).

Opposite page

16th century Qur'an leaf written in classical *bihari* script from India. The word Allah has been highlighted in gold throughout. The surah header text is outlined in white and written in gold *thuluth* within gold cartouches set within a band of strongly coloured panels. A large gold roundel with the letter *ayn* in white within red and blue concentric circles is visible in the upper left margin and indicates the end of a section. The page shows the start of Surah ar-Room (The Romans, 30).

Decorative centre pages from a Qur'an written in Afghanistan dating back to the late 18th century.

There are 10 lines of strong black *naskh* script per page set within a decorated panel.

The text alternates between the Qur'an and an interlinear *farsi* translation in a smaller red *nasta'liq* style script.

A wave of geometric floral patterns surround the main text compartment.

Individual verse endings are marked by simple circles. The right hand page shows the start of Surah Qaf, 50.

This Qur'an is extremely well bound between two hard leather covers.





A complete 18th century Qur'an from the Horn of Africa, most likely Ethiopia.

There are 17 lines of a variant *sahrawi* style Arabic script on each page, written in a compact format by a fine hand.

Verse endings are simply marked by three red dots.

Staining at the corners due to continuous use of the Qur'an over the years.

اشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
انتم الانبياء وما انزل الله من سوره ان انتم الانبياء وما انزل الله من سوره
يغفر انما اليكم لم رسول وما عليكم الا الباع للدين قالوا انما عليكم ما لكم
لن تسهوا الرحمن لكم ولجسدكم منا عذاب اليم قالوا طرقتكم معكم
ايت زكركم بل انتم قوم متسرفون وما من اوصال الله بينه وحاسه قال
يقوم اتبعوا المرسلين اتبعوا من لا يستلكم اجرا وهم مهذون
وما لي الا غلبا الذي فطرني والذي ترجعون انا نوح من ربي الهه
ان يردن الرحمن بضر لا تغر عني شفاعتهم شيئا ولا ينفعون
اتي اذ القى صلابتين اتي عاصت برزخكم فاسمعون قيتا اذ اظلمت الخه
قال اليك قومي يعلمون بما غفر لي ربي وجعلني من المرسلين
وما انزلنا على قومي من بعد من جد من السماء وما كنا منذرين ان
كانت الايحه واحده فاداهم حمداون يا حسرة على العباد ما
يايهم من سوا الا كلفوا به يستهزئون الم يروا كم اهلكنا قبلهم
من القرون انهم اليهم لا يرجعون وان كل لما صبح الدنيا محضو
ومرايه لهم الارض لليته احصيناها واخرجنا منها حبا فيه ياطون
وجعلنا فيها جنات من نخيل واعناب وفجرنا فيها من العيون
لياطوا من مده وما عملته ايدى رعا فلا يشكرون سبحان الذي خلق

The page starts with the last few verses of Surah Faatir, 35 (The Originator of Creation).

Surah headings are penned in red ink with the last two words of the previous surah incorporated into the header. The header indicates the start of Surah YaaSeen, 36.

Some punctuation marks have been highlighted in red ink.

The first word of the next page is repeated here to aid easy recitation.

الذين



18th century Qur'an from the Saharan region of Africa.

Written on very thick paper; most of the pages are frayed at the edges.

There are 12 lines of a variant *sahrawi* style Arabic text on each page written in black ink with a thick pen.

Text is enclosed within a simple orange coloured line border.

This Qur'an has been damaged by water at some point in time with many of the pages heavily stained.

Heavy staining at the corners due to continuous use of the Qur'an over the years.



The page starts with part of verse 39 through to part of verse 46 from Surah al-Anfaal, 8 (The Spoils of War).

Single large roundel with the word *juz'* within concentric circles indicates the start of the tenth part.

Individual verses are marked simply with three orange coloured dots.

Some of the punctuation marks have been highlighted in orange ink.

The first word of the next page is functionally placed here to aid easy recitation.



Complete Qur'an from the Saharan region of Africa

There are ten lines of strong *sahrawi* Arabic text on each page written in black ink.

The Qur'an is bound in a coarse leather cover. Some animal fur is visible in the bottom left corner.

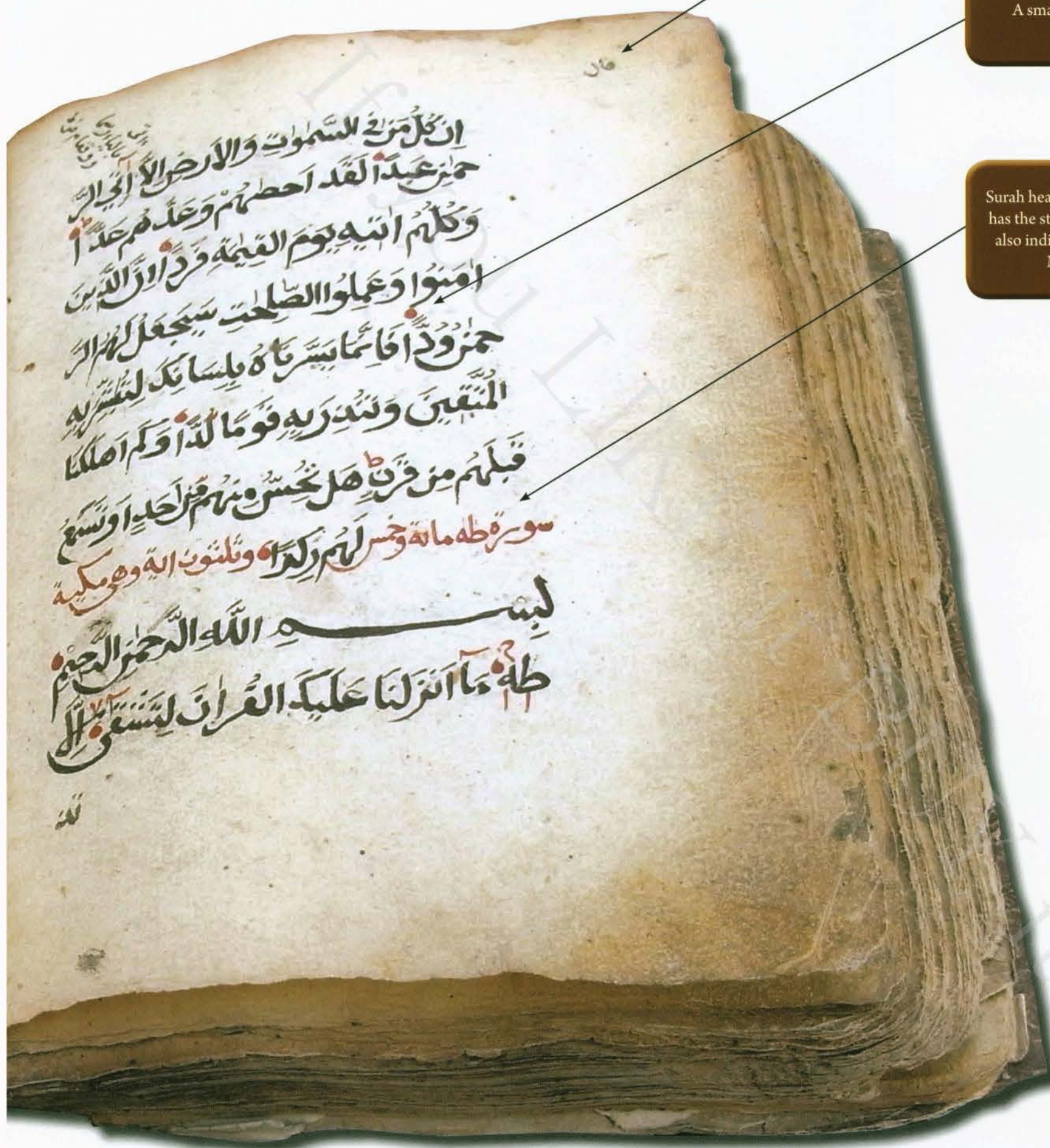
Written on very thick machine made paper. There is heavy staining on the corner of each page due to extensive use over the years.



The names of the *juz'* and the surah are simply written on the top corner of every page.

A small dark circle in red ink indicates the end of each verse.

Surah headers are written in red ink. This page has the start of Surah TaaHaa, 20. The header also indicates that the surah was revealed in Makkah and has 135 verses.

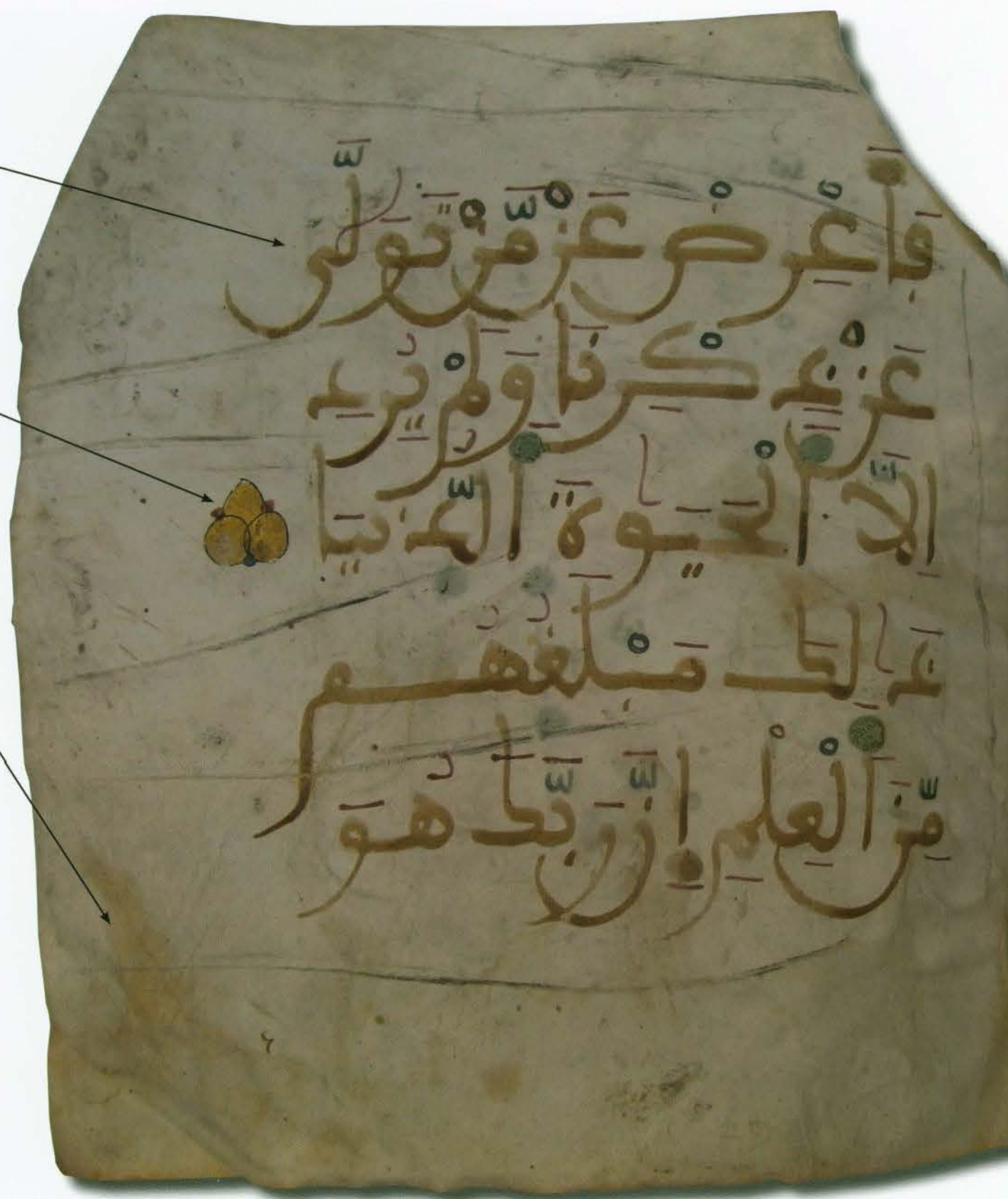


Exceptionally rare example of a Qur'an bifolium written on vellum from Andalusia (Muslim Spain), 12th century.

There are five lines of text per page written in large *maghribi* script in brown ink which is very typical of many Spanish Qur'ans.

Gold coloured shell and floret with red and blue pointing designate the end of the verse.

The pages show signs of water damage in a number of places.



The page starts with part of verse 27 from Surah an-Najm, 53 (The Star) and ends on part of verse 30.

Vowel markings have been penned in red and green ink.

Gold coloured shell shaped marker separates verses.

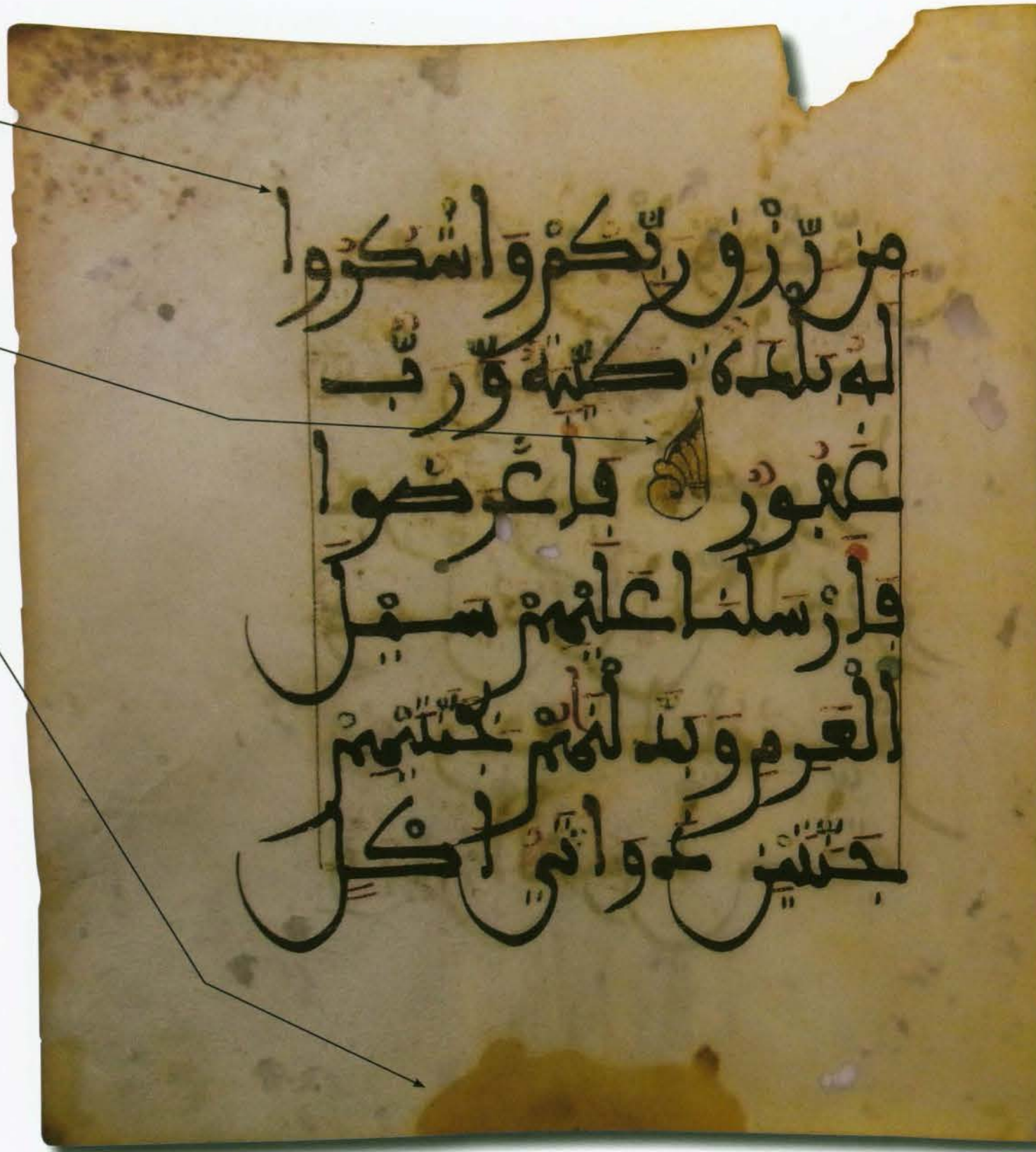


A Qur'an bifolium written on vellum from Andalusia (Muslim Spain), early 13th century.

There are six lines of text to the page written in large *maghribi* script using dark ink which is very typical of Spanish Qur'ans.

Gold coloured shell and floret shaped markers designate the end of a verse.

The pages show signs of water damage in a number of places. There is also evidence of some worm holes.



The page starts with part of verse 14 from Surah Saba, 34 (Sheba) and ends on part of verse 16.

Staining visible at the corner of the page due to extensive usage over time.

Diacritic markings and vowel points are in red, green, orange and blue ink.

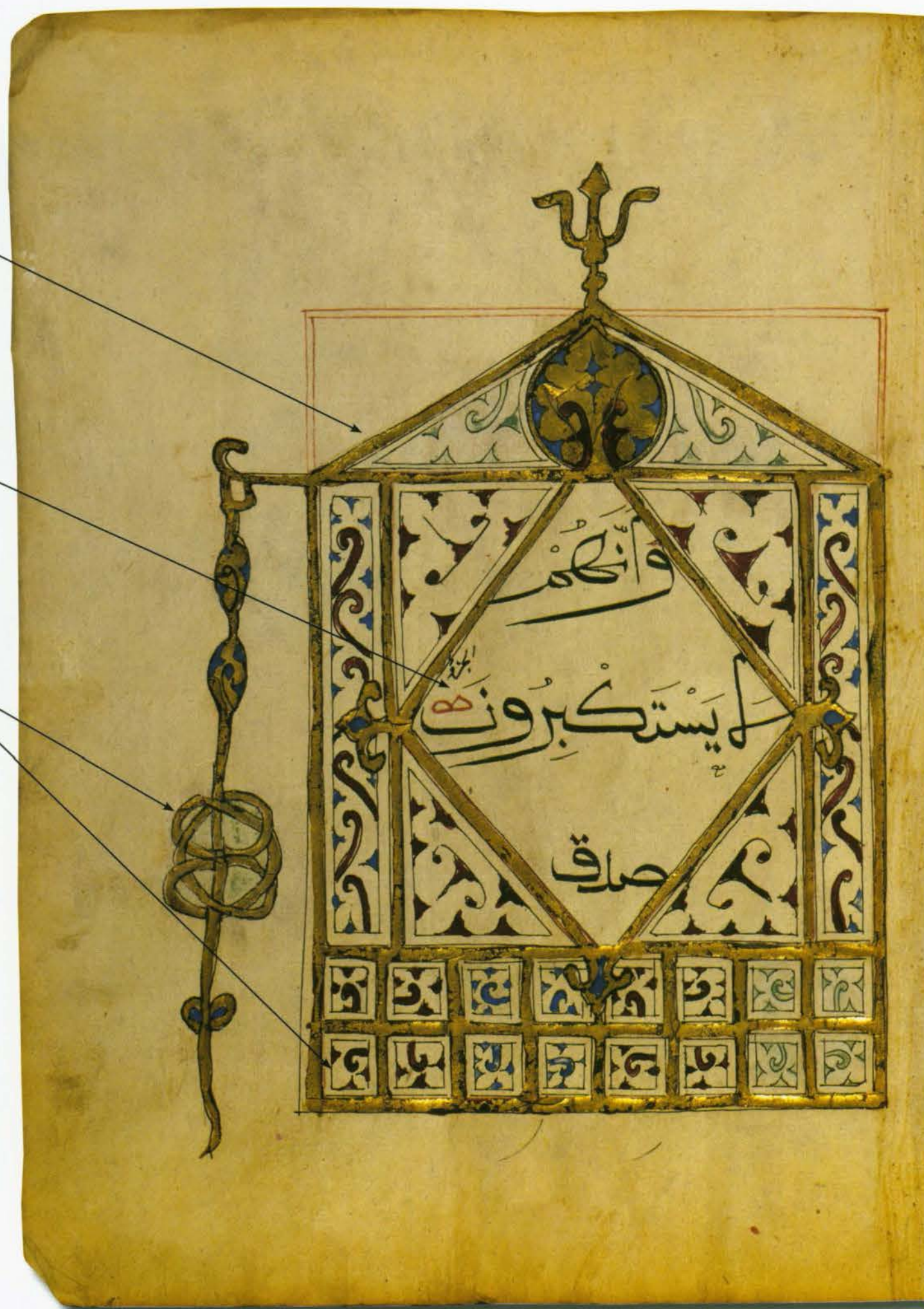


Finely decorated end pages of the sixth *juz'* from a 17th century 30 volume Qur'an written in China (Location: *British Library*).

The lantern motif with a diamond at the centre accommodates just three lines of text and is quite typical of large Chinese Qur'ans.

The Arabic text is written in a variation of *muhaqqaq* script known as *sini* script that shows clear influence from Chinese art.

The structure of the lantern motif is outlined in gold with use of blue, red and green ink for the internal decoration.



The text is the end of verse 82 from Surah al-Maaidah, 5 (The Table spread with Food). The last word *sadaqa* is not part of the verse but most probably is a shortened form of *sadaqallaahul adheem* (Allah says the Truth).

Vocalisation and body text is written in black ink with only minimal use of red.

Sini script is distinguished by its relatively thin upstrokes and long terminals that project below the line.



Exquisitely illuminated pages from a 17th century thirty volume Qur'an written in China.

The central text panel is surrounded by a lantern type structure of finely ruled lines.

Local flora and vegetation have inspired the type of decoration used in the upper panel.

Decorative gold and green coloured floral palmette protrudes into the margin.

Each page has only three lines of large text written in *sini* script with gold coloured ink. The format is typical of many Chinese Qur'ans.

The pages have become heavily stained and worn at the corners.



The decorative features on both pages are drawn as mirror images of each other.

The page starts with the first few words of the 24th juz' (verse 32 and part of 33 from Surah az-Zumar, 39 (The Groups)).

Vocalisation and body text is written in black ink, with only minimal use of red.



A Qur'an written in Dagestan during the early 18th century.

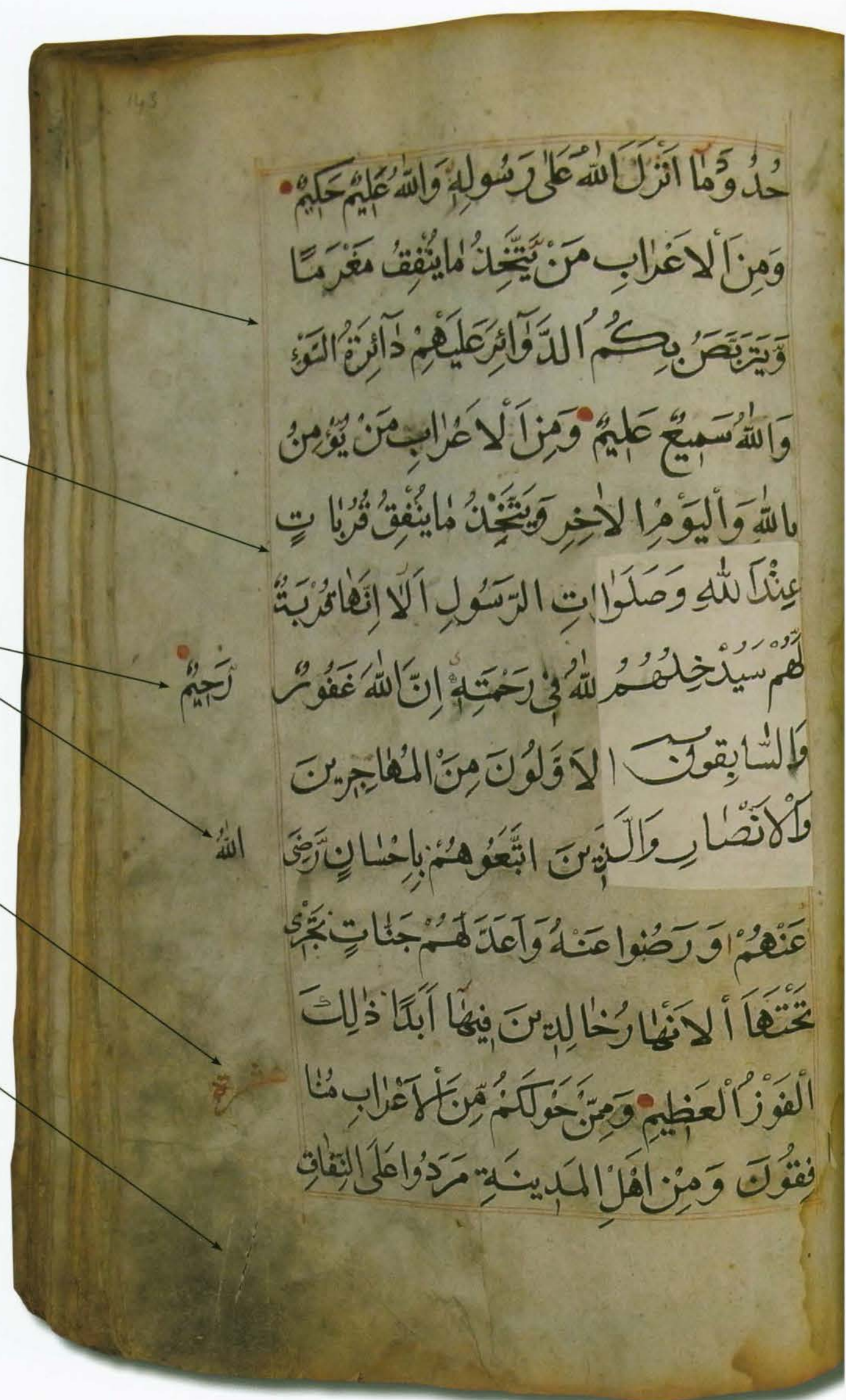
The text is written in a large bold *naskh* style within a simply designed page.

There are 15 lines of text per page written on thick paper enclosed within a framework of finely ruled lines.

These two words have been written in the margin as they were initially left out by mistake by the scribe.

The word *ashara* (ten) written with red ink in the margin indicates the end of ten verses.

All of the pages are heavily stained at the corners due to heavy usage over the years.



The page starts with Surah at-Tawbah, 9 (The Repentance) verse 93 and continues through to the other page ending halfway through verse 101.

A marginal ornament drawn in a local style indicates the start of the 11th juz'. The first word of the new section has been crudely highlighted.

The Qur'an has undergone some major repair work on a number of pages.

The next word in the verse is written at the bottom of the page to aid smooth recitation.



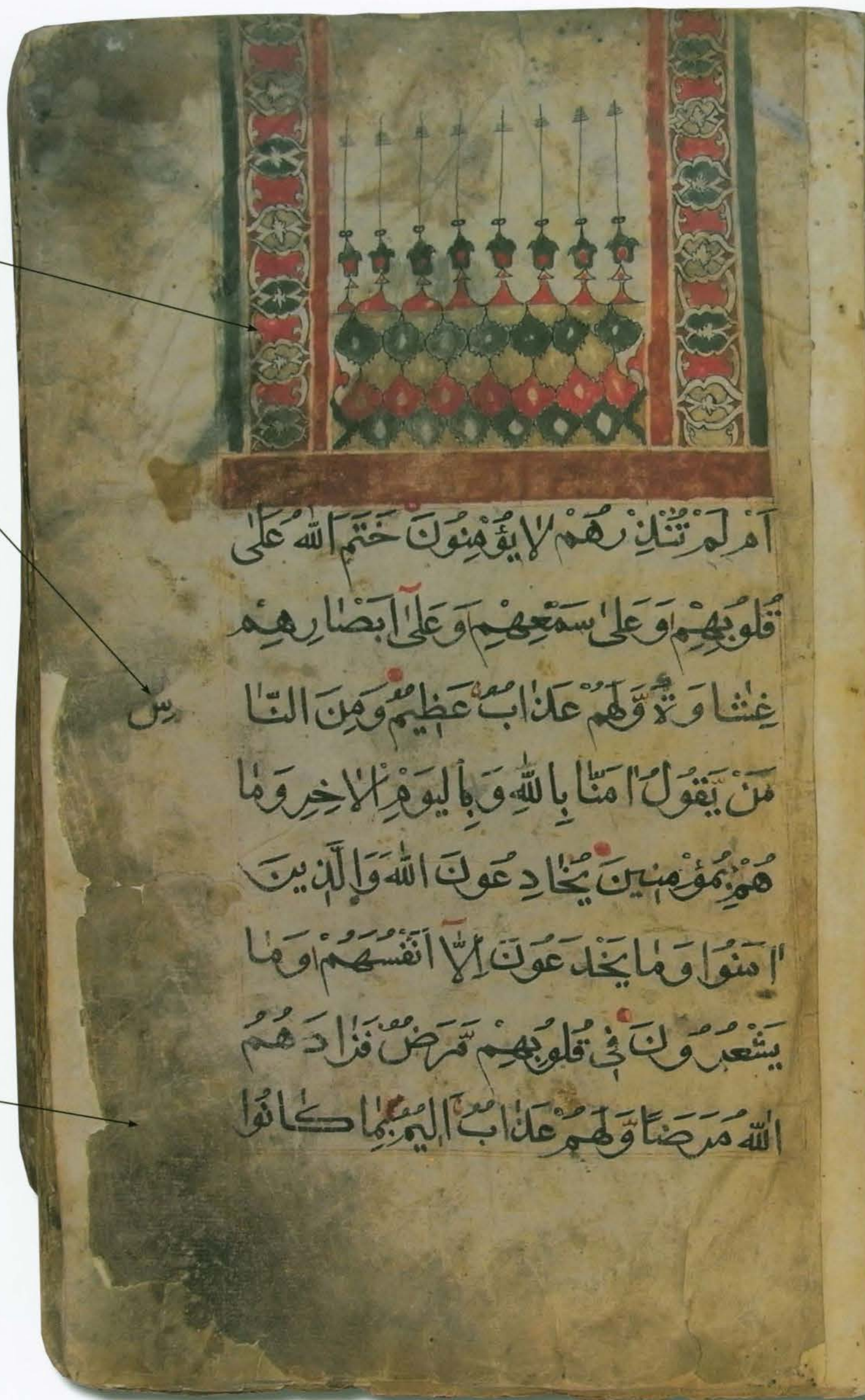
إِنَّمَا السَّيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَذَرُونَكَ وَهُمْ
 أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ
 اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ يَعْلَمُونَ
 إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَدُوا
 لَنْ تَوْفَّيَهُمْ وَلَكُمْ قَلِيلٌ نَبَأًا اللَّهُ مُرَاجِيءُكُمْ
 وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ
 إِلَى عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
 تَعْمَلُونَ سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ
 إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رَجُوسٌ
 وَمَا وَدَّعَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ جُزْءًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ
 يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَى عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّكُمْ كُفَرَاءُ وَنَفَاقًا وَاجْدُرُ لَا يَعْلَمُوا

The first part of a two volume Qur'an copied in Dagestan, 18th century.

Only one of the opening pages is decorated with red and green floral design work.

The letter *seen* has been left out by mistake from the word *wa-minan-naasi-man*, (and there are people who...) but has been added later in the margin.

Heavy usage of the Qur'an over time has resulted in wear and staining at the corners.



أَمْ لَمْ تَتَذَكَّرْهُمْ إِيَّاكَ فَمِنْكَ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
 قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ
 غِشَاوَةً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
 مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا
 هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ يَخَادِعُونَكَ اللَّهُ وَالَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَكَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَمَا
 يَشْعُرُونَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ
 اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ كَانُوا

The opening pages have the whole of Surah al-Fatihah, 1 (The Opening) and the start of Surah al-Baqarah, 2 (The Heifer).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ
وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ
الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَلَمْ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَمُنْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ

The text is written in a large *naskh* script using black ink.

Red circles drawn above the line indicate the end of a verse.

The next word in the verse is functionally placed at the bottom of the page to aid smooth recitation.



Conventionally decorated opening pages from a very fragile Indian Qur'an written during the 17th century.

Most of the pages are damaged beyond repair and in a very delicate and fragile condition.

Surah headers are written in red with the main surah text in an elegant *naskh* script.

There are six lines of text within a cloud motif upon a light green background. The text panel is enclosed by a thickly drawn border.

The decoration style is typical of many Mughal palace Qur'ans from this era, with central hasp shapes projecting into the margin.

Tassel like projections protrude into the margin from three sides.



Surah Fatihah, 1 (The Opening) is written on the right hand page, with the start of Surah al-Baqarah, 2 (The Heifer) on the opposite page.

Hardback cover is heavily damaged and in very fragile condition.

Simple red dots separate the verses and lines of text are set within cloud motifs.

The binding has come loose over time and is now beyond repair.

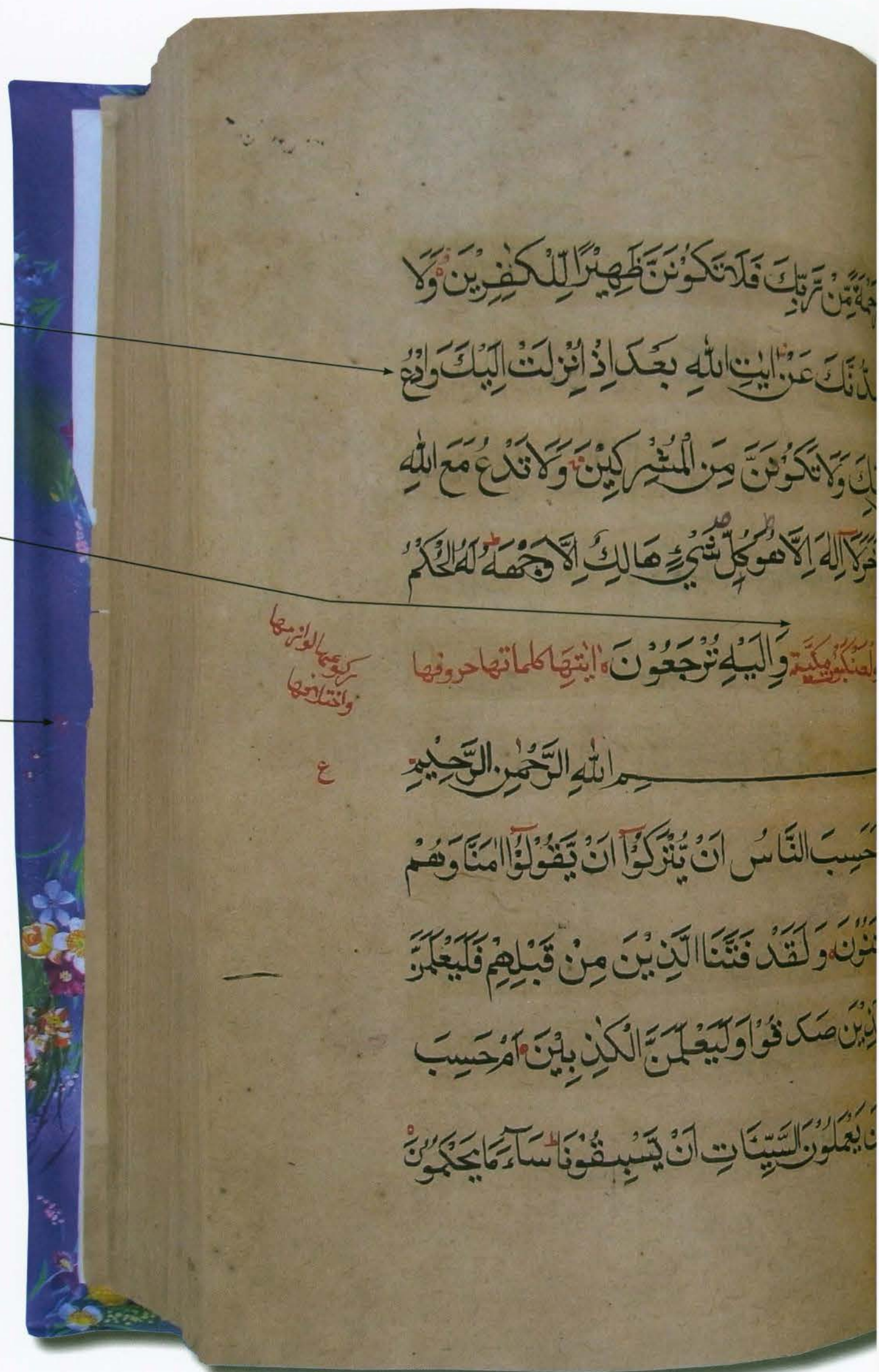


A very large 17th century Qur'an from the late Mughal period of Islamic rule in India. The size and elegance of this Qur'an indicates that it probably belonged to a mosque or was owned by a wealthy family.

Qur'anic text and vowel marks are written in large black *naskh* script by a very skilled calligrapher.

The surah header calligraphy indicates the start of Surah al-Ankaboot (The Spider, 29) and that it was revealed in Makkah.

The hard back cover has been covered with cloth at a more recent date.





أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ ٢٠

The Arabic words *amman kalaqa* and the number twenty indicates the 20th *juz'*.

Some punctuation marks are highlighted in red ink for emphasis.

The letter *ayn* signifies the end of a section within the surah.

Small open red circles mark verse endings.

The next few words in the verse are repeated at the bottom to aid smooth recitation.



الْمُتَّقِينَ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ

An unusual Qur'an section with many lines per page from 18th century India.

The word *ashara* (ten) in the margin indicates the first ten verses of the surah.

Written in a compact *naskh* script with some textual markings highlighted in red ink.

The text is enclosed within a large single lined rectangular compartment.

Identical staining on each page shows where readers have turned the pages over the years.

عشر

رَشَدًا. فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ أَذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا. ثُمَّ
بَعَثْنَا هُمُ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا. نَحْنُ
نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَ
زِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى. وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا
رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَن نَّعُودَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْمَالِقِينَ قُلْنَا
إِذَا شِئْنَا هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَّاعِلُونَ. وَدُونَهُ الْمَلَأَ لَوْلَا
يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيْنِ يَدَيْنِ مِمَّنْ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ أَغْوَثٍ عَلَىٰ أَنَّهُمْ
وَإِذَا غَرَّتْ لَهُمْ رُكُوعُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوَّاكَ الْكَهْفِ
يَسْأَلُكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَهَيِّئُ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا
وَتَرَى السَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَوَارِعًا مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا
غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبَتْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ
آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْمُسْتَدِينَ وَمَن يَضِلْ فَلَن يُجِدَ
لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا. وَحَسْبُكُمْ أَفْقَاظُهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقِلَهُمْ
ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَاهُ بِالْوَحِيدِ
لَوْ أَطْلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَكَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَلَمَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُجْبًا
وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَا هُمُ لِيَسْأَلُوا رَبَّهُمْ قَالِ قَائِلُ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ
لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا الْبَيْتَ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ
أَعْلَمُ بِاللَّيْلِ لَيْسَتْ قَابِغَةُ أَحَدِكُمْ يُورِقُكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ
فَلْيَنْظُرُوا فِيهَا أَرَأَيْتُمْ أَفَلَا يَكْفُرُونَ بِرَبِّهِمْ وَلَقَدْ لَظَفْنَا

The word *sajdah* written in red is functionally placed in the margin to instruct the reader to prostrate at this point during recitation.

The word *ashara* indicates the 110th verse of Surah al-Israa, 17 (The Journey by Night).

Header panel indicates the start of Surah al-Kahf, 18 (The Cave) written in red ink.

The next word in the verse is written at the bottom of the page to aid smooth recitation.



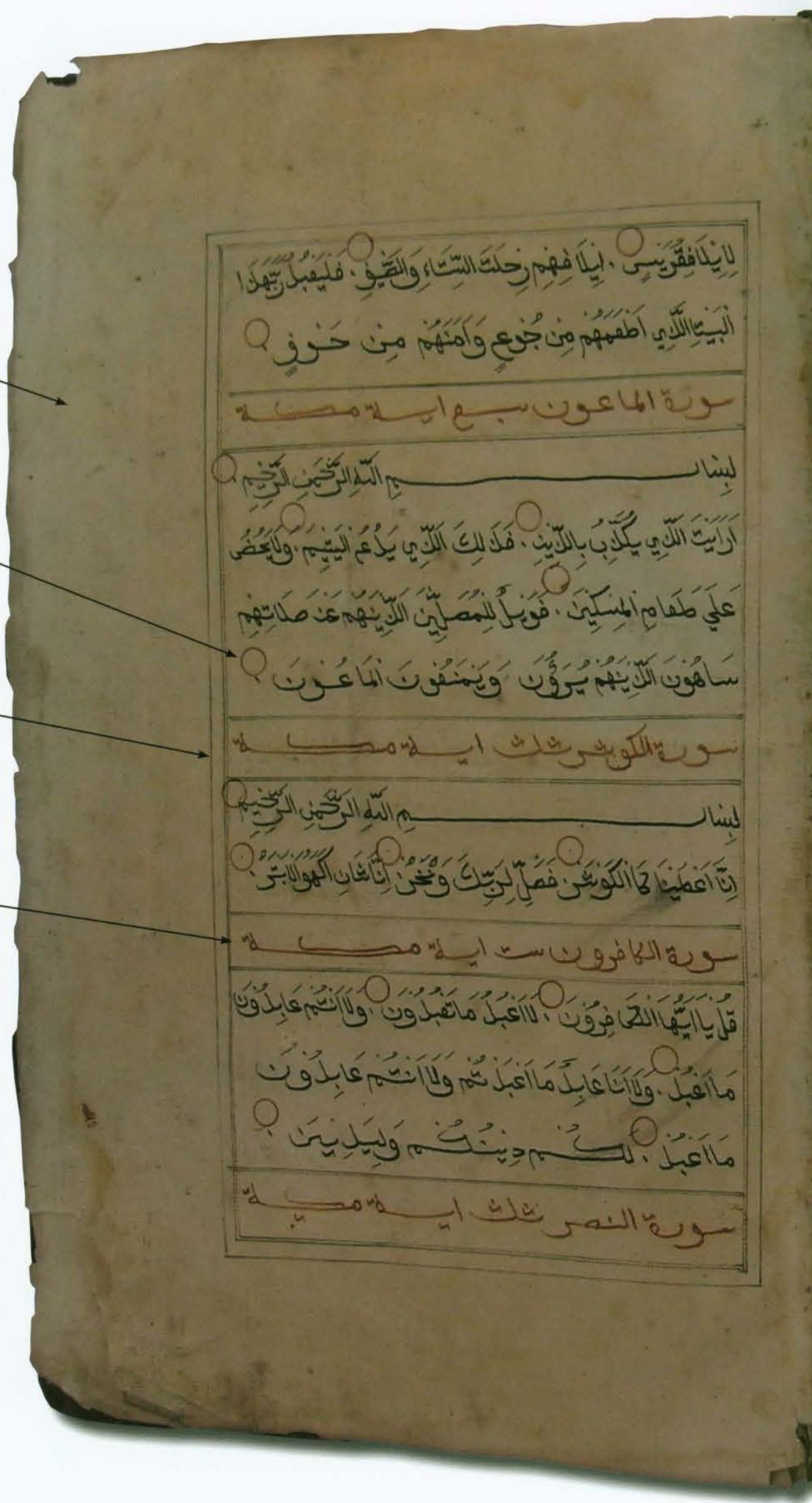
Late 18th to early 19th century
Indonesian Qur'an.

Text is written in a large cursive hand on
water marked machine made paper, most
likely imported from Europe.

Open red circles without numbers are used to
mark the end of each verse.

Surah title text is in red within a simply
ruled lined panel.

The page is divided into a number of panels
consisting of simple lines.



The page starts with Surah al-'Asr, 103 (The Time) and continues with Surah al-Humazah, 104 (The Slanderer); Surah al-Feel, 105 (The Elephant); Surah Quraysh, 106; Surah al-Maa'oon, 107 (The Small Kindnesses); Surah al-Kawthar, 108 (A River in Paradise) and Surah al-Kaafiroon, 109 (The Disbelievers).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَ خَشِيرٌ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

سورة العنكبوت سورة مكية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَيْلٌ لِلْمَلِكِ إِذَا مَلَكَتْهُ مَوْرِدُ اللَّهِ جَمَعَ مَا لَوْ عَدَدَهُ يَحْسِبُ أَنَّ مَلَأَهُ
أَحْلَدَهُ فَتَالَيْتَ بَدَتْ فِي لَحْمَتِهِ وَأَمَّا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَحْمَتُهُ
نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ الَّتِي تَطْلَعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ

سورة الفل حمس في عهد ممدده سورة مكية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الَّذِينَ شَرَكُوا فِئْتَانٍ يَمَضَوْنَ بِالْأَفِيلِ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَّهُمْ فِي ظُلُمٍ
وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ
فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

سورة الفلق سورة اربع ايه مكية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Vocalisation and text is written in black ink with only minimal use of red.

The Bismillah (In the Name of Allah) text is elongated across the whole width of the text panel.

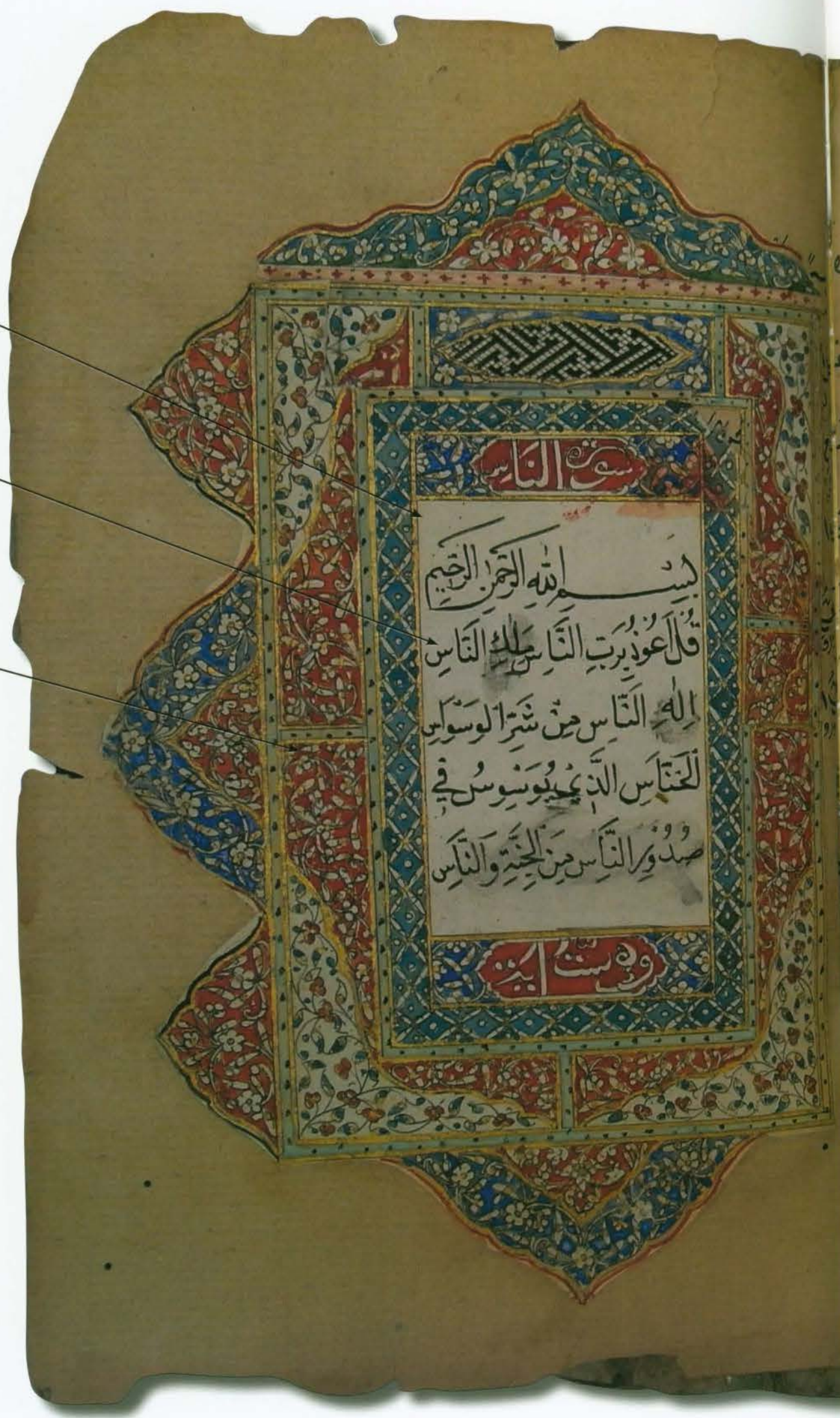


Decorative end pages from a South East Asian Qur'an, early 19th century.

The text compartment is split into three sections; the header and footer panels and a central text compartment.

The body of the text is fully vocalised and written in a *naskh* style.

Traditional decorative floral design work surrounds the text compartment. A lattice framework encloses the central text panel.



Surah al-Falaq, 113 (The Daybreak) is written on the right hand page with Surah an-Naas, 114 (Mankind) opposite.

The page seems to have been repaired at some point in time and overlaid upon a page containing previous text that is just visible in the centre.

Surah information panels are written in an unvocalised script in white upon a red background.



18th century South East Asian Qur'an most likely from the Java region.

The text is neatly written in a simple black naskh/jawi script on machine made paper.

The calligrapher has used an acidic ink that has caused it to bleed through the page.

Heavy staining at the corners where readers have turned the pages over the years.

سَاءَ نَاهُ خَلْقًا أَسْرَافَتِبَارِكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ خَالِقِينَ ۝ ثُمَّ
 إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمُتُّوْنَ ۝ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَاتِ
 يَبْعُسُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقُ وَمَا كُنْ
 عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ۝ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ
 فَأَسْكَنَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا لُقْمًا رَوْنًا ۝
 فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّةً مِنْ نَجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَكُمْ فِيهَا
 فَوَكُّهٌ وَكَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۝ وَشَجَرَةً تُخْرُجُ
 مِنْ طُومَرٍ سِينَاءُ تُنَبِّئُ بِالْذُّهْنِ وَصَبَّغُ الْكَلْبَيْنِ
 وَأَنْ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةٌ لِيُفَكِّرُمْ وَمِمَّا يُبْطُونَهَا
 وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۝ وَعَلَيْهَا
 وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
 فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا
 تَتَّقُونَ ۝ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا

The page starts on Surah al-Mu'minoon, 23
(The Believers).

سورة المؤمنون آية
فَقَمْرًا مَوْكِيًا وَنَقَمًا تَنْصِيرًا
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ عَنْ الْغَوْرِ مَفْرُوتُونَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
فَاعِلُونَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ نَفْسَهُمْ خَافِظُونَ ۝ إِلَّا عَلَى
أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ۝
فَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَذَابَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
لَا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَأَصْحَابُ نَيْعٍ أَعْوَنُونَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ عَلَىٰ صَلَواتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْوِزْرَ ثَوَاتٍ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
الْفِرْدَوْسُ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ
مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ۝ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي كَرٍّ رَمِيمٍ ۝
ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا نُطْفَةً عُلْقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعُلْقَةَ مُطْفَةً فَخَلَقْنَا
لَقْنَا الْمُطْفَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ رَأَيْنَا

أَوَّلُ آيَةِ الْحَالِ وَالْجُزْءِ
وَالْجُزْءِ كَيْفَ كُنَّا اللَّهُ

The text written sideways, in the margin, in
red, indicates the start of the eighteenth juz'.



Enlarged view of a rare miniature Qur'an printed in Kashmir, dated 1893.

The Qur'an pages are numbered and octagonal in shape.

The Qur'anic text has been printed within a triple line octagonal border.

This manuscript is unusual as there is no vocalisation and the text is written in a minute style of *naskh* script known as *ghubar* (dust).

The manuscript is bound with a octagonal leather hardback cover. Its small size would suggest that it was most likely used during travel.



Beautifully written double pages from a Qur'an dated 1036 CE (427 AH) from Iraq (British Library, London).

Compactly written in an archaic version of *naskh* script on hand made light brown coloured paper.

Small gold roundels within the text denote the end of each verse. The verse markers are missing in places, for example at the start of the surah.

The name of the Surah (Saad, 38) is written in a decorated header panel using *kufic* script with a white outline. The last word of the previous surah is incorporated within the header.

Large overlapping roundels inscribed with *kufic* text indicate the end of every tenth verse.

A *sajdah* marginal device with an arabesque design is functionally placed to inform the reader to prostrate at the end of the 24th verse.



The page shows the start of the 20th verse from Surah as-Saaffaat (Those Ranged in Ranks, 37).

Small palmettes in the text margin, in the shape of the letter *ha*, indicate the end of every fifth verse.

The first word of the following page is written in the bottom margin to aid recitation.



A very large 12th century Qur'an from the Pre-Mamluk late Abbasid period.

Written on large sheets of high quality thick hand made paper.

This magnificent Qur'an consists of 377 pages and is written in a majestic archaic *muhaqqaq* style of Arabic script.

Illuminated floral shapes mark the end of individual verses.

The acidic nature of the ink has caused the marginal device on the reverse side to show through.



The page shows the end of the 26th verse from Surah an-Noor, 24 (The Light) through to the start of verse 34 on the opposite page.

Marginal device with the word *ashara* written in gold kufic within blue and gold concentric circles denotes the end of ten verses.



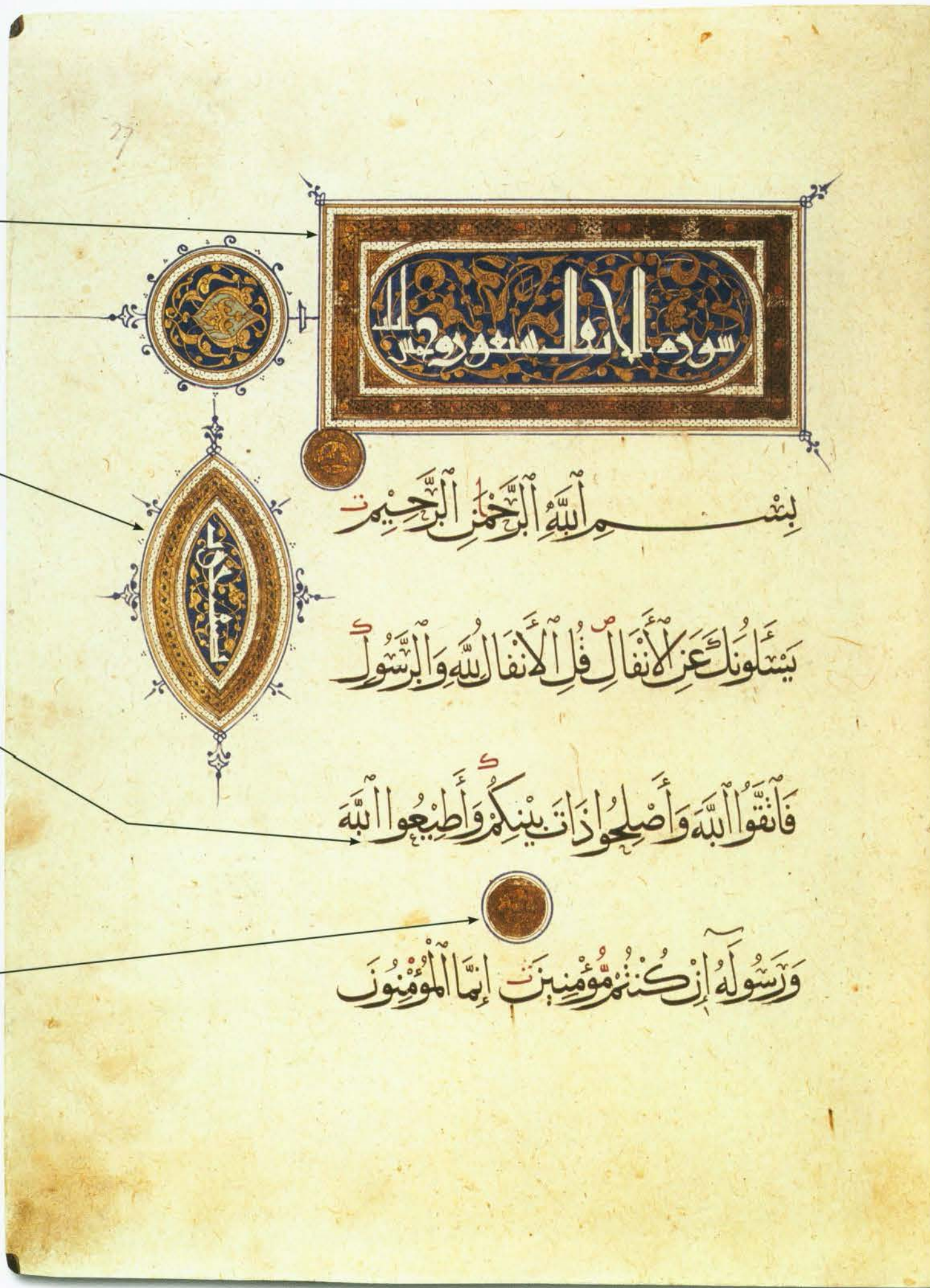
Very ornate double pages from the 14th century Mamluk Qur'an of Sultan Faraj ibn Barquq (*British Library*).

The chapter header indicates the start of Surah al-Anfaal, 8 (The Spoils of War) and is written in monumental *kufic* in white within an ornate rectangular panel.

The left hand page has an almond shaped feature with the word *nisf hizb* meaning half (of the) quarter, in white *kufic*, marking the beginning of one half of the sixty parts into which this Qur'an is divided.

Written in a refined *rayhani* (literally, sweet basil) script. Like *naskh*, *rayhani* is a small script (its larger counterpart is *muhaqqaq*) written with serifs on *alif* and *laam*, looped letters that are open, as well as long tails and rounded bowls.

The text is written in a continuous format without any great separation between verses. Large coloured roundels above the line mark verse endings.



The page contains the last part of Surah al-A'raaf, 7 (The Heights) starting with the last two words of verse 204.

A large pointed roundel forms a decorative marginal ornament

Some of the vowel markings have been written in red ink.

The instruction for the reader to prostrate during recitation is indicated by the word *sajdah*, written in blue *kufic* script and set within an interesting architectural feature.



A small 20th century Qur'an scroll measuring 4.4 cm in width with a length of 740 cm.

The scroll contains the complete Qur'anic text enclosed between red parallel lines.

Surah Fatihah (The Opening, 1) and the start of Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2) are written within shield shaped compartments.

The Qur'anic text is written in a cursive hand without any vowel markings.

The scroll was most likely used by a traveller and could be kept rolled up in a leather pouch.



سورة الفاتحة

الحمد لله رب العالمين
 الرحمن الرحيم ملك يوم
 الدين اياك نعبد واياك
 نستعين اهدنا الصراط
 المستقيم صراط الذين انعمت
 عليهم غير المغضوب
 عليهم ولا الضالين

سورة البقرة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
 الذي كنا لنهتدي لولا
 أن يرزقنا الله
 ما كنا لنهتدي لهدى
 الرحمن الرحيم

[illegible]



The end of the scroll showing Surah al-Masad, 111 (The Palm Fibre) through to Surah an-Naas, 114 (Mankind).

Following convention the scroll also contains an end prayer to be recited after completing the recitation of the Qur'an.



A Qur'an bifolium from the North African region, 9th century.

The text is written in *western kufic* script using brown ink and is vocalised throughout in red.



There are thirteen lines of text on this page written on light coloured vellum.

Staining at the edges appears to be due to the affects of water damage.

Large decorated roundels are used to separate individual verses.

The page starts with part of verse 41 from Surah Baqarah, 2 (The Heifer) and ends partway through verse 54 on the word *fataaba*; the *ba* from the end of the word is written on the following page. Splitting words was the norm with *kufic* scripts but was discontinued with the adoption of cursive scripts.

A gold marker in the shape of a shell indicates the start of a new *hizb* division.



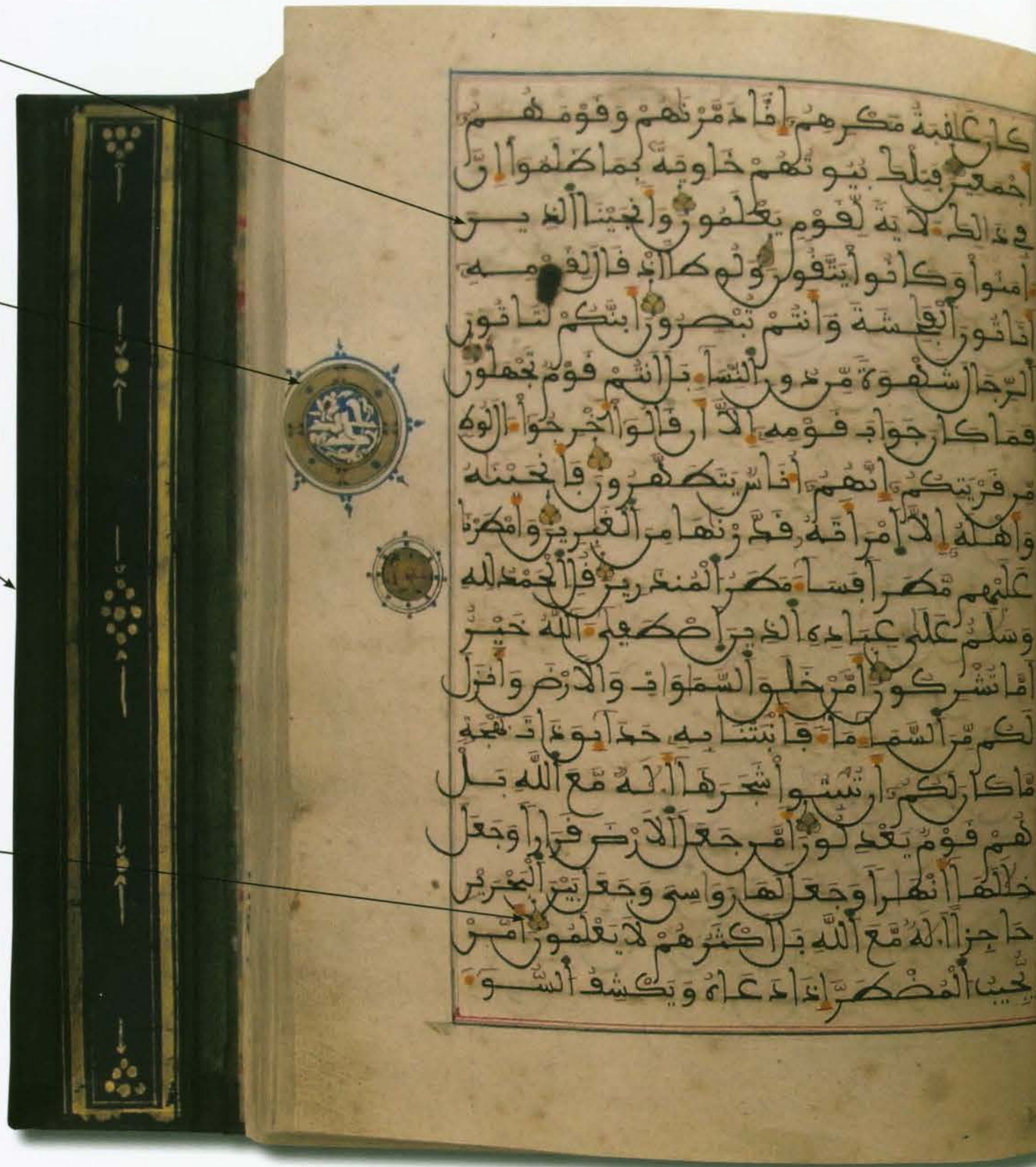
A complete 14th century North African Qur'an written in *maghribi* script.

Maghribi script is written in black ink and vocalised throughout with green and saffron markings.

The word *hizb* written in ornamental *kufic* in white upon blue ground and enclosed within concentric circles indicates the end of a section.

The Qur'an is bound in a thick leather case with design work embossed in gold.

Floral verse markers coloured in gold separate individual verses.



Surah headings are written in *andalusian kufic* script with arabesque decorative ornaments on the margins.

The page shows the start of Surah an-Naml, 27 (The Ants); partly obscured by the next page.

A multi-coloured teardrop shaped marginal ornament with the word *sajdah* written in gold *kufic* is functionally placed to indicate that the reader must prostrate during recitation.



A small section containing only Surah Yaaseen, 36, copied in the Ottoman empire, 18th century.

There are eleven lines of text per page copied in *naskh* script in black ink on very thick paper.

The small size and light leather binding of this manuscript indicates that it was most likely carried for use during travel.

The text is enclosed within a large rectangular compartment.

The Qur'an has been exposed to water damage as the ink has smudged in a number of places.



A large semicircular panel with floral design work in a number of colours is placed above the surah header text.

The surah header panel is written in red ink and gives the name of the surah, Yaseen, 36, citing the fact that it was revealed in Makkah and the number of verses.

Individual verses are separated by large gold coloured circles.

The first word of the following page is written in the lower margin as an aid to continuous recitation.



Decorative opening pages from a Qur'an originating in the Ottoman Empire, 19th century.

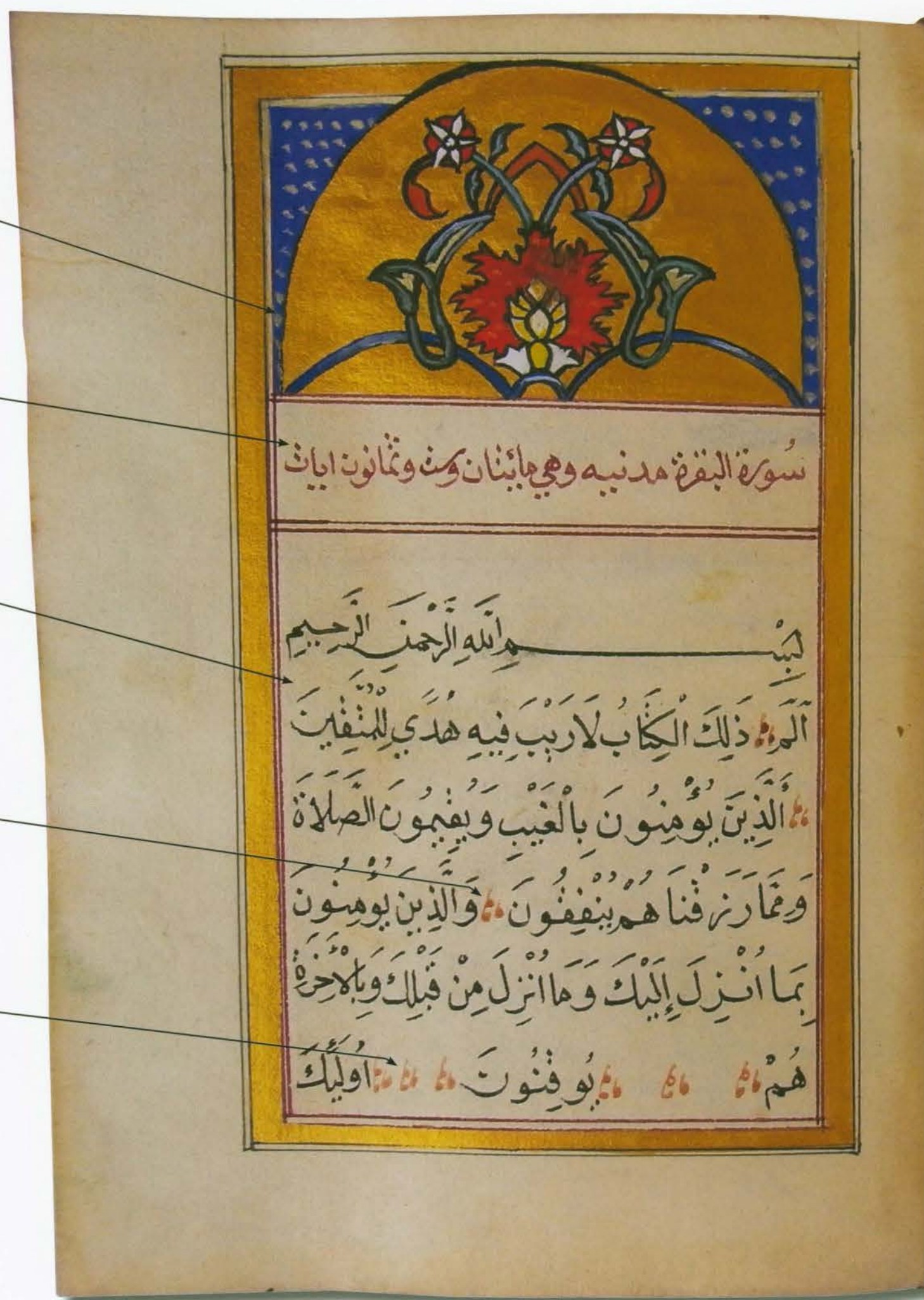
Both pages are dominated by bright floral design work using a variety of colours.

The details of the surah are written in a basic *naskh* script in red without vowels.

This page has the start of Surah al-Baqarah, 2 (The Heifer) written in *naskh* script.

Single verse divisions are indicated simply by a group three red symbols.

In some places the red symbols are used in a repetitive pattern and seem to serve a decorative rather than a functional purpose.



Opening page of the Qur'an with the whole of Surah al-Fatihah, 1 (The Opening) written in *naskh*.

سورة الفاتحة الكتاب مكية وهي سبع ايات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، مَالِكِ
 يَوْمِ الدِّينِ، إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ،
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ، صِرَاطَ الذِّبْ
 أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ، غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ،
 وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، آمِينَ

The text is enclosed within a thick double lined red and black frame filled with gold and black edging.

Note that the word *aameen* is not part of the Qur'an but is sometimes included at the end of the Surah al-Fatihah.

The word *bismi* from the following page is written in the lower margin as an aid to continuous recitation.



A Qur'an bifolium originating in Persia written during the 14th century.

There are nine lines of Qur'anic text per page written in large *muhaqqaq* script.

The text is written in a continuous format with small gold coloured floral shapes above the line marking the end of a verse.

A blue and gold coloured marginal device indicates the end of the surah's first *ruku*.

The pages are heavily stained most likely due to the effects of water.

A pear shaped marginal ornament shows every tenth verse.



The page has the last part of Surah al-Ankaboot, 29 (The Spider) and the start of Surah ar-Room, 30 (The Romans) ending on part of verse 16 of the latter on the other page.

Surah headers are written in gold with some of the vowel marks highlighted in blue.



Beautifully decorated 16th century Qur'an from Persia or possibly Iraq.

Every page is set within an orange and gold coloured multi-line frame.

Qur'anic text is written in an elegant *rayhani* script, with coloured circles separating individual verses.

The surah header text is embellished in white upon gold foliate work and indicates the start of Surah al-Ma'arij, 70 (The Ways of Ascent).

Alternating blue and gold marginal ornaments indicate every fifth and tenth verse.



This page has text from Surah al-Haaqqah, 69 (The Inevitable) starting half way through verse 17.

An interesting point to note here is how the scribe has mistakenly left out a few verses (19-24) and then made the correction by writing sideways in the extended text frame.

This type of occurrence highlights how Qur'ans would always be thoroughly checked for mistakes upon completion.

The first word of the following page is functionally repeated beneath the text compartment to aid smooth recitation.



وَيَجْلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ
 لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْحِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَفُتِنَ
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْحِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيهِ
 وَلَمْ أَدْرَأْ مَا حَسَابِيهِ يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ الْقَاضِيَةَ مَا أَغْنَى عَنِّي مَا لِيَ
 هَٰذَا عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ثُمَّ اجْبِلُوهُ فَبِئْسَ لِلْفَاجِرِ سَلِيلُ
 ذُرْعَاهُ سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ
 بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَلَا يَخِشُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ فَلَئِنَّ لَهُ
 الْيَوْمَ مَهْلًا عَجِيمًا وَلَا طَعَامٌ لِلْآيْمَنِ غِيلِينَ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا
 الْخَاطِئُونَ فَلَا أَقْسَمُ مَا بَصُرْتُمْ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ
 رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ وَمَا هُوَ يَقُولُ شَاعِرٌ قَلِيلًا أَمَا تَذَكَّرُونَ
 يَتْلُو كِتَابًا مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَلَوْ يَقُولُ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ
 لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ
 أَحَدٍ يَنْصُرُهُ

أحد عنه

Magnificent double pages from a 17th century Qur'an from Persia written in *naskh*.
(Location: British Library).

Written in black *naskh* script, with interlinear Qur'anic translation in Persian, written in *nasta'liq* script using red ink.

Alternating blue and gold marginal medallions indicate every fifth and tenth verse.

The word *khamisa* (five) is written in *thuluth* script after every five verses in gold ink within a blue medallion.

The word *ashara* (ten) indicates every ten verses in blue ink within a gold coloured medallion.

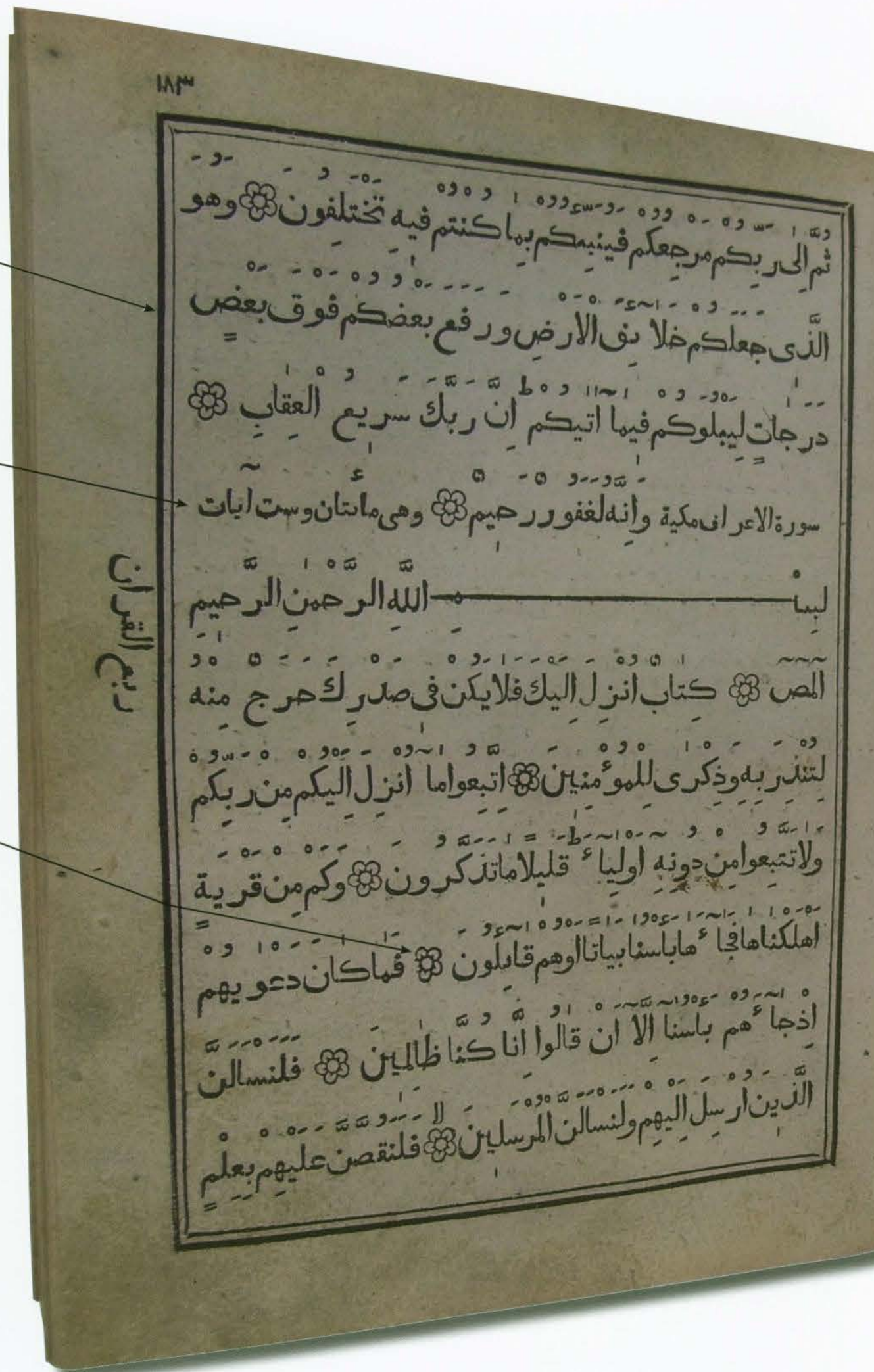


Printed Qur'an from Kazan, Turkestan,
dated 1860 CE.

The text is printed in a clear script within a
rectangular lined border.

Details of the start of the next surah, al-A'raf,
7 (The Heights) are given either side of the
last verse of the previous surah.

Individual verses are separated by
simple floral shapes.



Arabic numerals indicate the page number in the top corner of the page.

The Qur'an is bound within a hard dark red leather cover.

The right hand page contains the last few verses of Surah al-An'aam, 6 (The Cattle).

Vowel markings have been printed in a straight line, which is a break with hand written convention.

١٨٢

الملا بكة او ياتي ربك او ياتي بعض ايات ربك يوم ياتي بعض
ايات ربك لا ينفع نفسا ايمانها لم تكن امنت من قبل او كسبت
في ايمانها خيرا قل انتظروا انا منتظرون ﴿١﴾ ان الذين فرقوا
دينهم وكانوا شيعا لست منهم في شيء انما امرهم الى الله ثم
ينبئهم بما كانوا يفعلون ﴿٢﴾ من جاء بالحسنة فله عشر امثالها
ومن جاء بالسيسة فلا يجزي الامثله او هم لا يظالمون ﴿٣﴾ قل
انني هادي ربي الى صراط مستقيم ﴿٤﴾ ديناقبها ملة ابراهيم
حنيفا وما كان من المشركين ﴿٥﴾ قل ان صلاتي ونسكي
ومحيي ومماتي لله رب العالمين ﴿٦﴾ لا شريك له وبذلك امرت
وانا اول المسلمين ﴿٧﴾ قل اغير الله ابغي ربا وهو رب كل شيء
ولا تكسب كل نفس نفس الا عليها ولا تزر وازرة وزر اخرى

ثم







Qur'an Binding and Markers



Previous pages

Detail view of the first few verses from Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer, 2), written in large *muhaqqaq* style script, late 16th to early 17th century, Uzbekistan.

Left

A series of dark brown leather bound Qur'an volumes from a set of thirty, North Africa, 18th century.

Opposite page

Black leather covered Qur'an with gold coloured decorative work embossed on the front, back and the flap, China, 17th century.



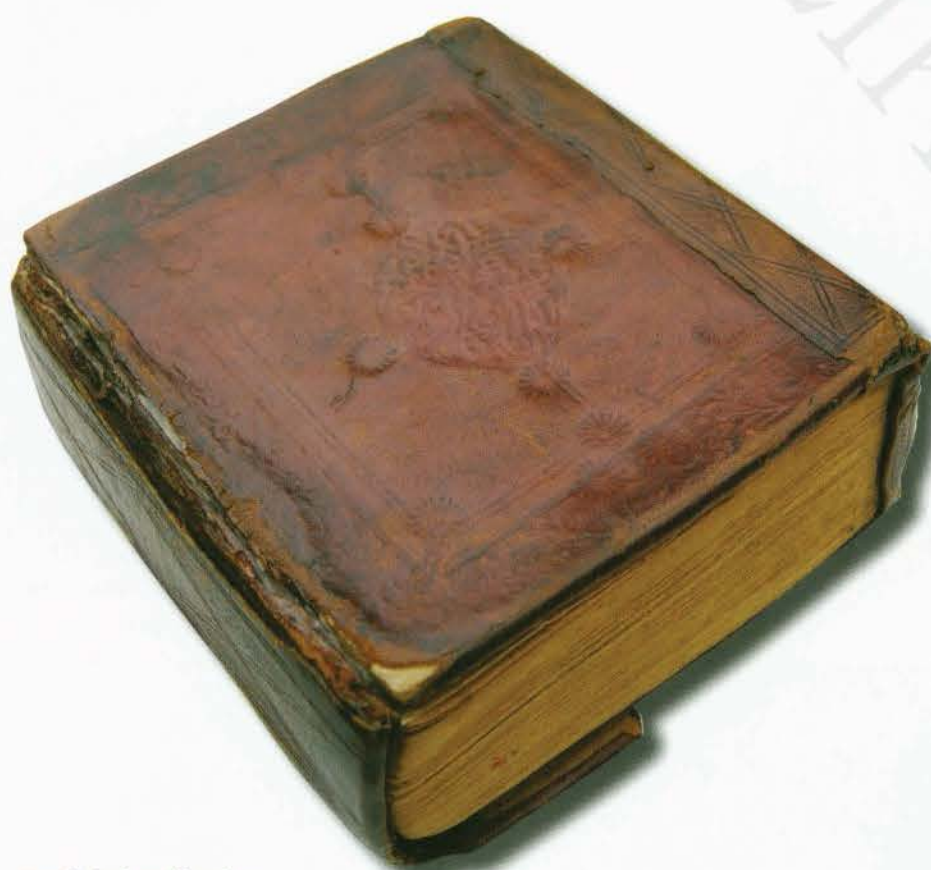
Maghribi Qur'an juz' with a heavily worn dark leather cover, 18th century North African. The binding has come apart and the pages are no longer held together.



18th century Ottoman Qur'an section bound in a dark leather cover with a flap.



Qur'an covered in dark brown leather with a flap from the African Horn region written in a compact *sahrawi* script, 18th century. The binding is heavily damaged and the Qur'an is loosely held together.



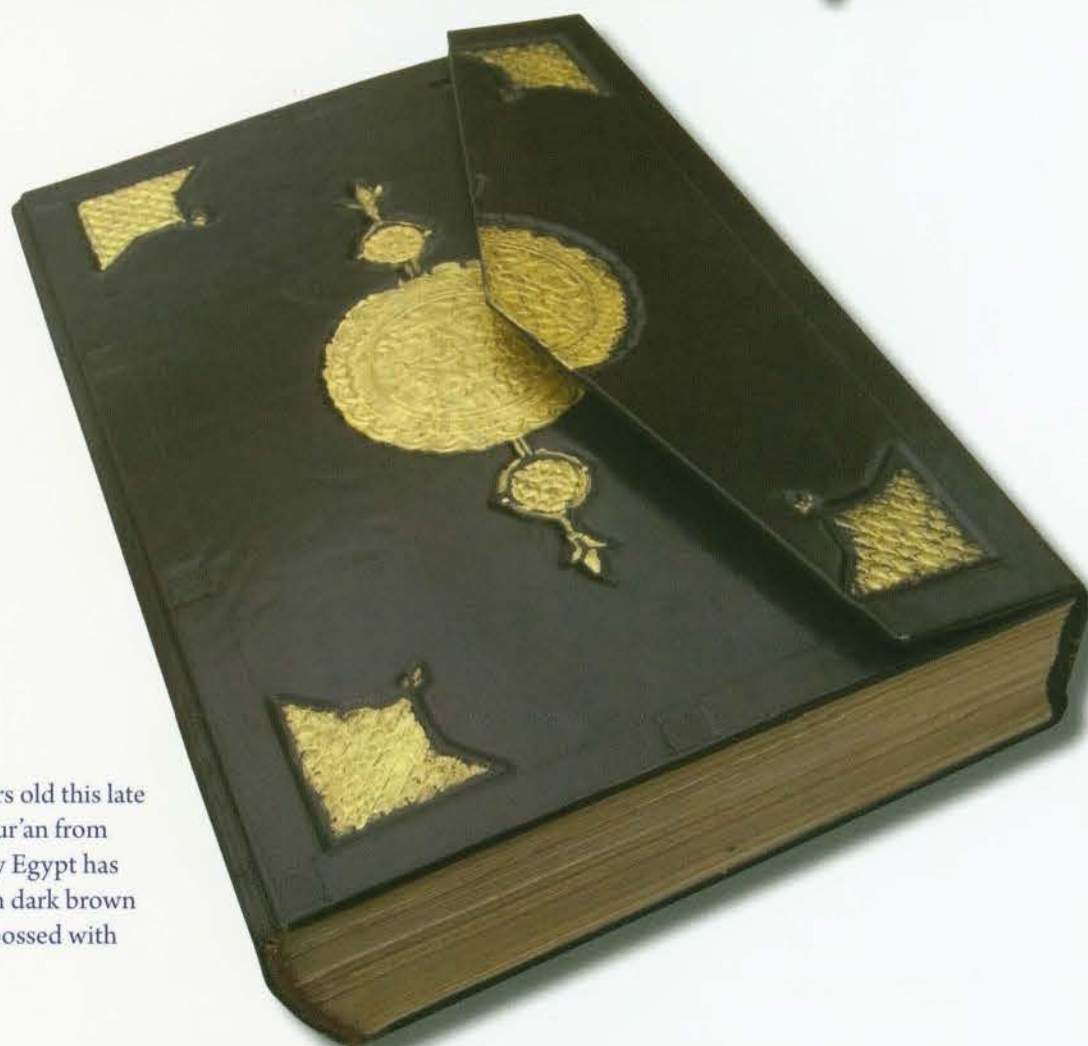
Small dark red leather covered Qur'an with a flap. The Qur'an is embossed with an emblem in the centre, North African, 17th century.



A Qur'an commentary covered with tan coloured leather and embossed with green emblems, 17th century.



View of the spine of an 18th century Indonesian Qur'an. Unusually covered in an intricately patterned traditional hand-woven *songket* fabric.



At over 700 years old this late 13th century Qur'an from Syria or possibly Egypt has been rebound in dark brown leather and embossed with gold emblems.



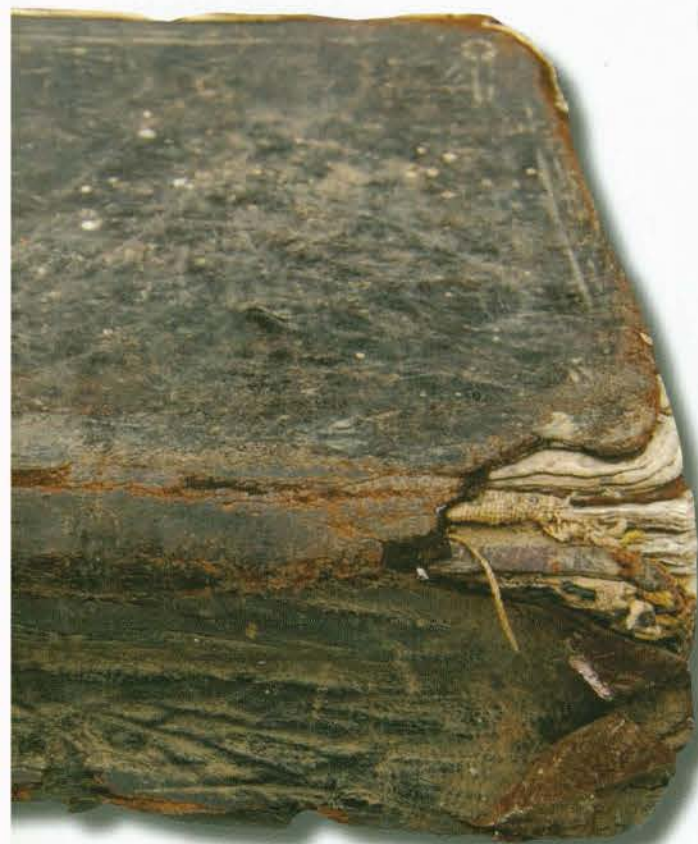
18th century *naskh* Qur'an leather bound showing heavy damage and wear.



Dark red leather bound Qur'an section embossed with a central emblem. Ottoman, 17th century.



18th century Indonesian Qur'an missing the covers. The multiple binding strings are visible on the spine.



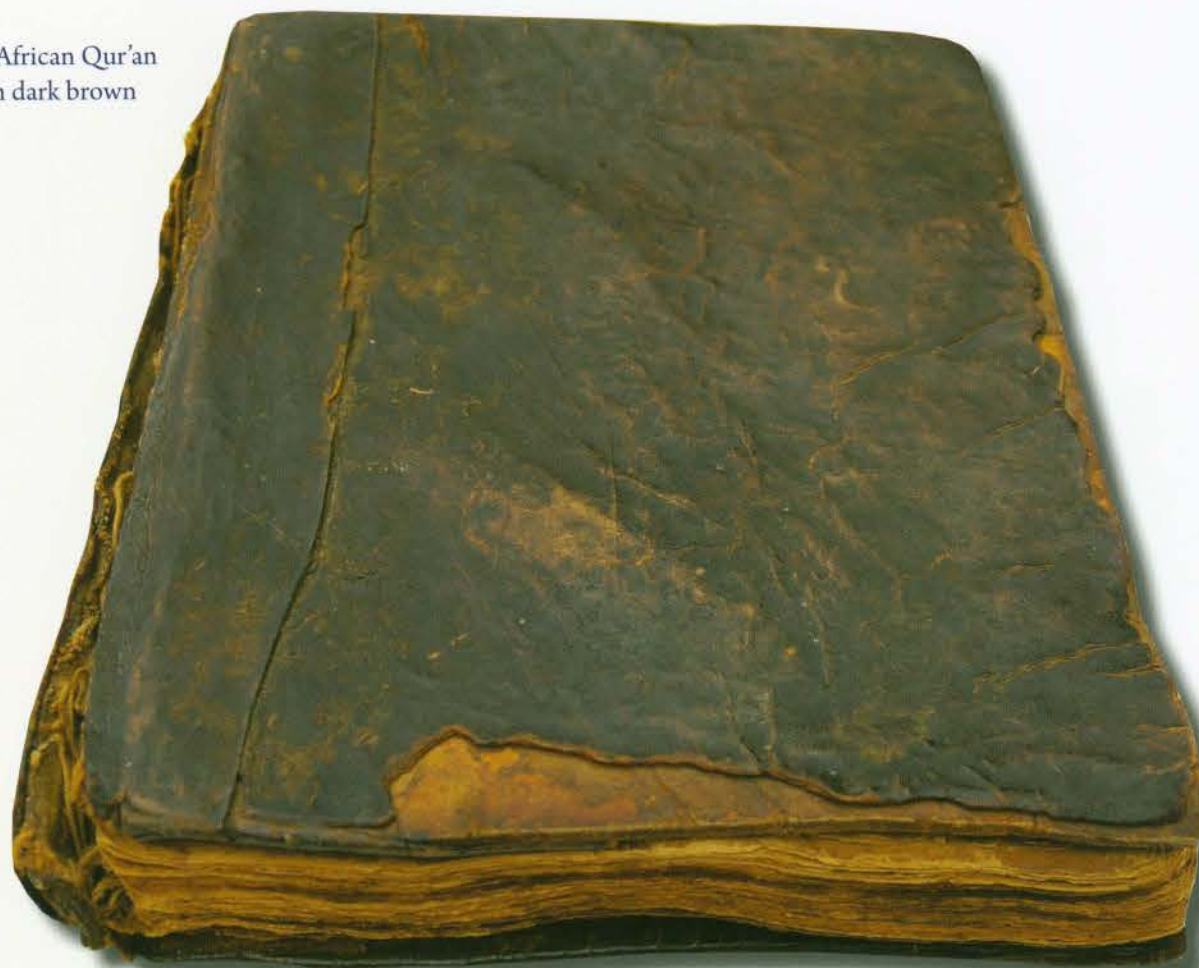
A very well preserved 1000 year old Qur'an written in small archaic *naskh* from Syria or Iraq. Rebound with a dark leather cover and embossed with floral designs.



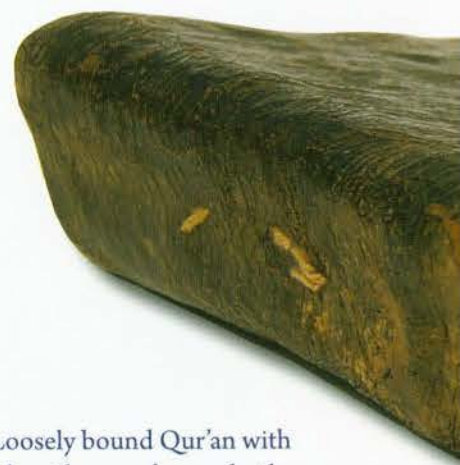
Dark leather covered Ottoman Qur'an, 18th century. The cover has become heavily damaged and worn and is in quite a brittle state.



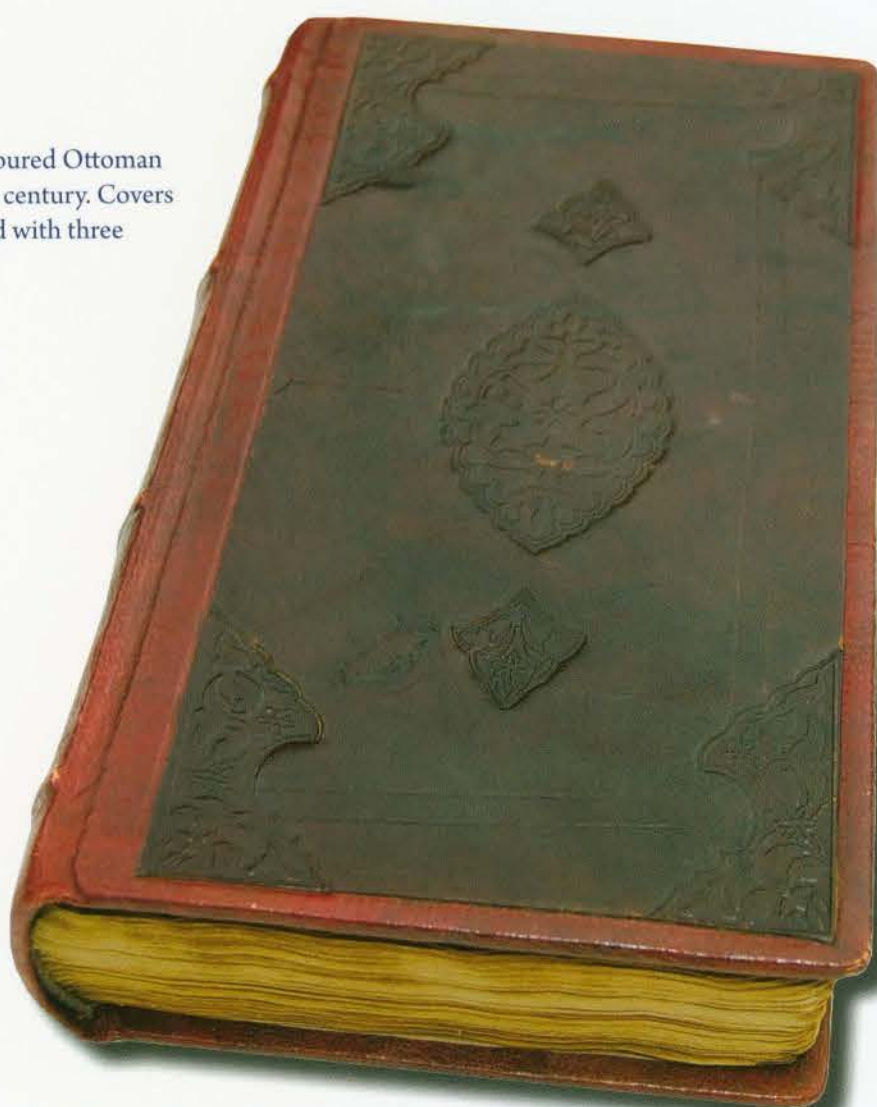
18th century African Qur'an
juz' covered in dark brown
leather.



Loosely bound Qur'an with
a heavily worn brown leather
cover. Indonesia,
18th century.



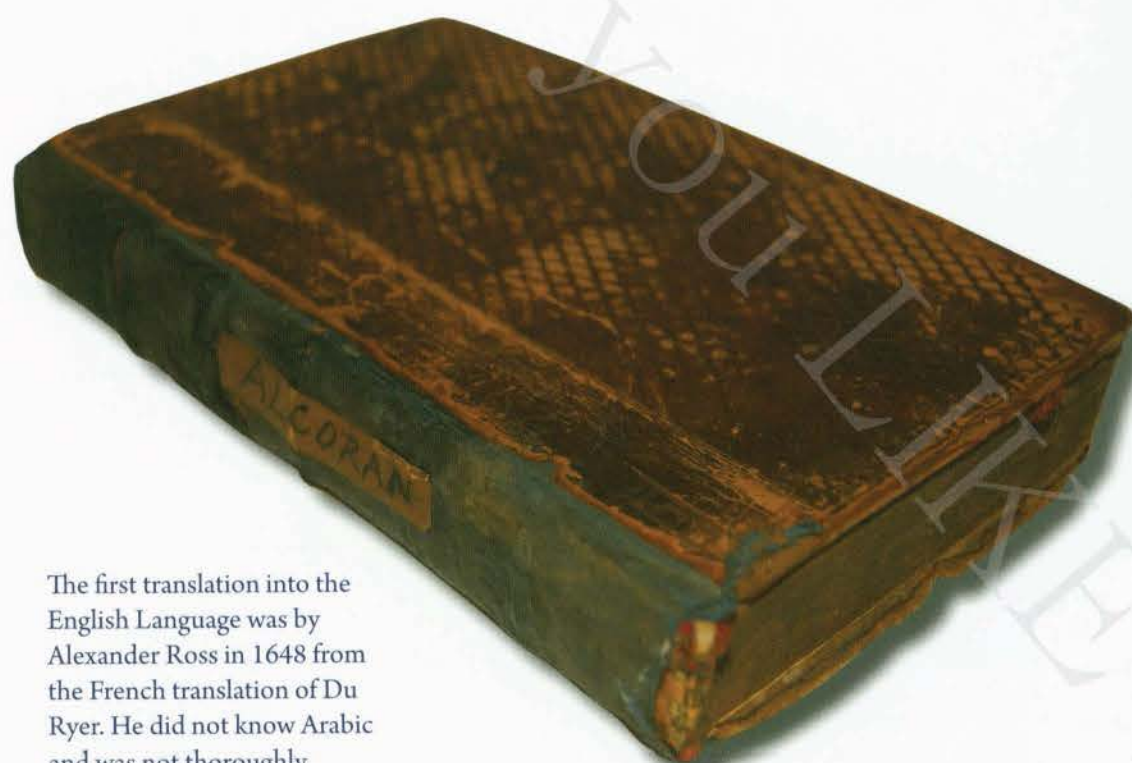
Dark red coloured Ottoman
Qur'an, 18th century. Covers
are embossed with three
emblems.



Leather covered Qur'an with decorative floral
design. Qajar, 18th century.



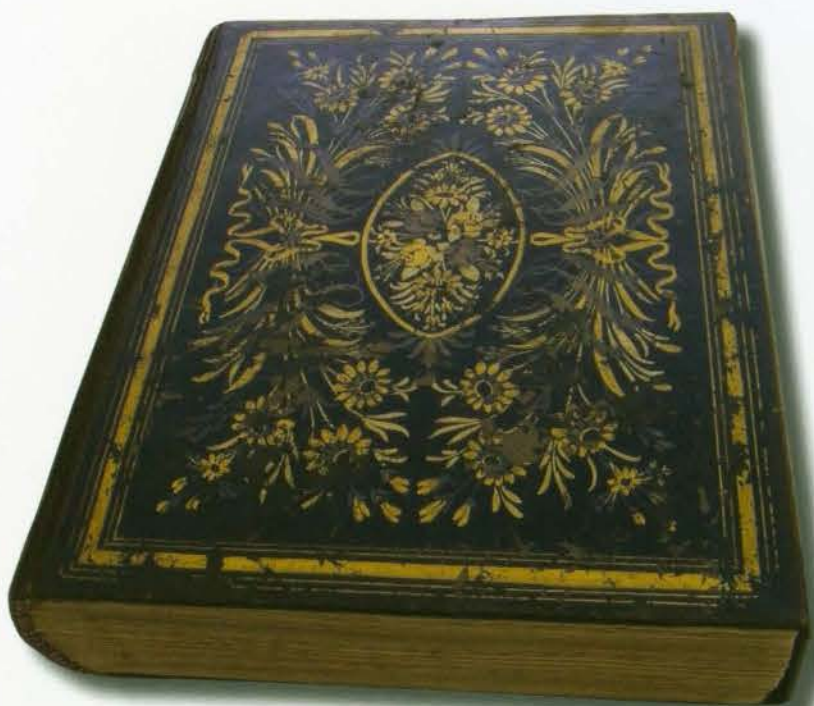
Embossed dark red/brown leather covered Qur'an from China, 17th century.



The first translation into the English Language was by Alexander Ross in 1648 from the French translation of Du Ryer. He did not know Arabic and was not thoroughly proficient in French which would explain the poor quality of the translation.



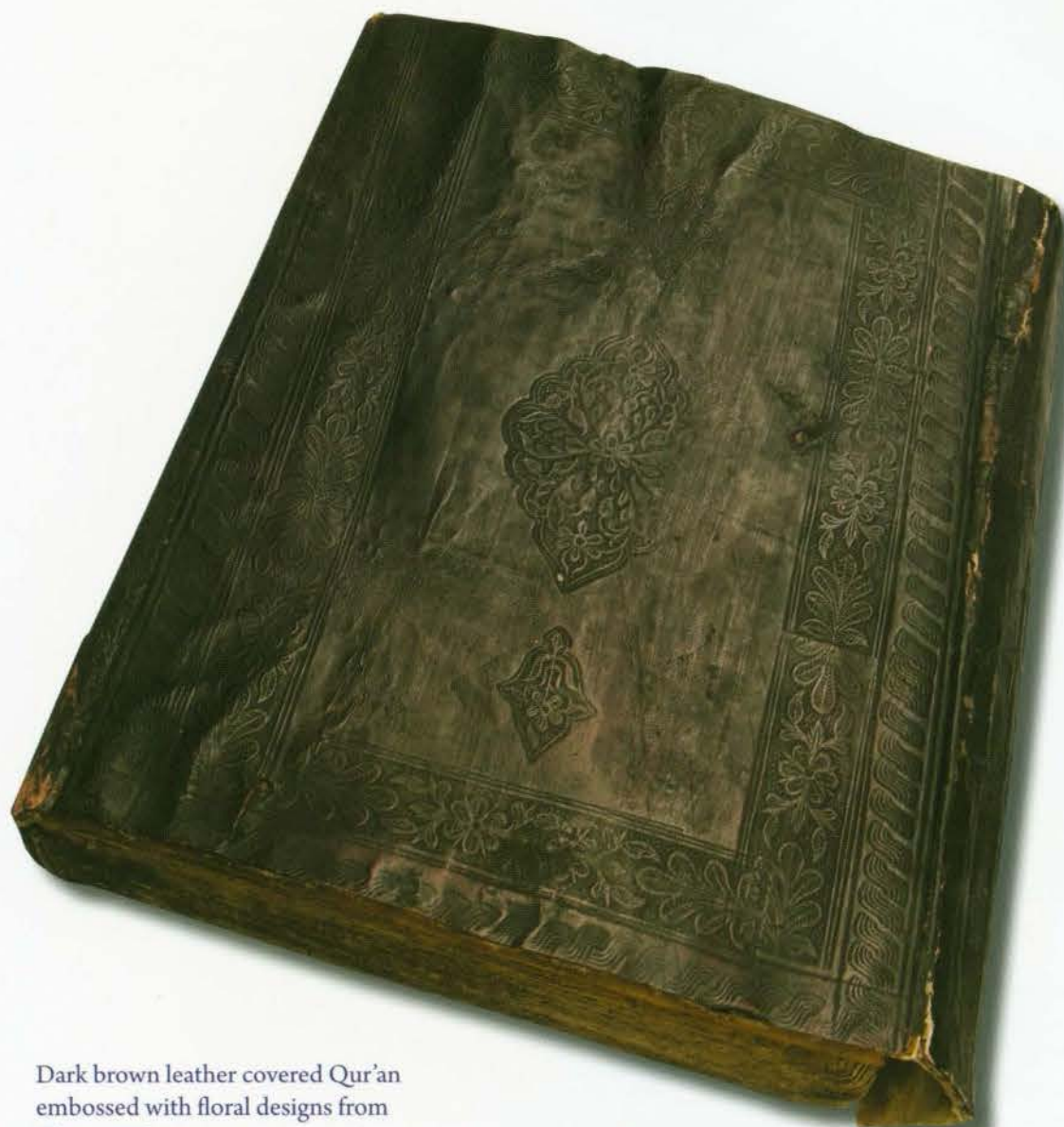
The first translation of the meanings of the Qur'an into a European language was the Latin translation made by Robertus Ketenensis and Hermannus Dalmatia at the behest of Peter the Venerable, the president of the Cluny Monastery in France in 1143 CE. After 500 years of private circulation within the church, it was finally published in Basel, Switzerland in 1543 CE. Early translations were done in Latin and German. Andre Du Ryer, who had been the French Consul in Egypt and had considerable knowledge of both the Turkish and Arabic languages, first translated the Qur'an into French. This was printed in Paris in 1647. The version was inaccurate and contained frequent transpositions, omissions, and even additions. In 1783, Savary published what is considered to be a much better translation. The above image shows the first edition of the translation by Savary.



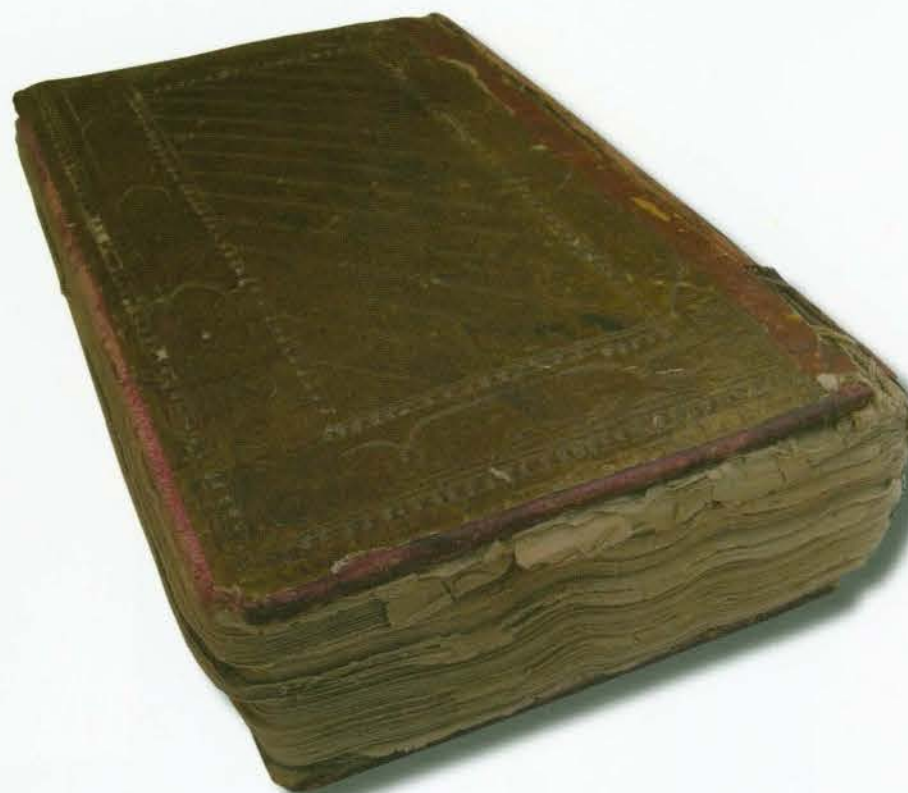
18th century Qur'an from Syria or Iraq with a hard cover.



Simply bound dark brown hard leather cover, 17th century Ottoman Qur'an *juz'*.



Dark brown leather covered Qur'an embossed with floral designs from China, 17th century.



18th century Qur'an from Syria or Iraq with a hard cover.

Opposite page

The leather cover of this Qur'an has been extensively damaged over the course of time and requires major repair work to be carried out. The binding remains fairly intact. Handwritten in local *naskh* script from South East Asia, 18th century.





Concentric circles enclosing the word *juz'* to denote the start of a new Qur'an part, North Africa, 18th century.



Blue and red *ruku* device with the letter *ayn* enclosed within concentric circles. From a Qur'an written in *bihari* script, India, 16th century.



Blue and gold teardrop device with a cloud-like outline used to indicate the end of a section from a *bihari* Qur'an, India, 16th century.



Ruku medallion with the letter *ayn* enclosed within concentric circles. From a Qur'an written in *bihari* script, India, 16th century.



Tenth verse marker with the word *ashara* written in *eastern kufic* upon gold ground indicating the end of ten verses, India, 16th century.



Ornate blue, gold and red *shamsa* device marking the start of a new *juz'* from a complete 17th century Indian Qur'an.



The word *hizb* written in ornamental *kufic* in white upon a red background and enclosed within concentric circles, North Africa, 14th century.



Decorative star shaped marginal device indicating the start of a new section within a *surah*, Persia, 17th century.



Brightly coloured *sajdah* marker indicating that the reader must prostrate at the end of the verse, North Africa, 15th century.



Brightly coloured triangular shaped decorative textual marker with central floral design upon red ground, Ottoman, 20th century.



Ornamental *ruku* marker consisting of blue and gold concentric circles within a floral motif, India, 16th century.



Blue and gold decorative marginal roundel with gold and red foliate work on blue, marking the start of a *ruku*, India, 17th century.



Triangular marker in green with the words *sadaqallahul adheem* (Allah says the Truth) Ottoman, 20th century.



Tenth verse marker with the word *ashara* written in *eastern kufic* script within blue and gold concentric circles, Abbasid, 12th century.



Beige, green and red marginal roundel used to designate the end of every ten verses from a Dagestani Qur'an, 18th century.



Gold, red and blue coloured ornamental *juz'* marker drawn in the shape of a cloud motif, 17th century, India.



Unusual brown and blue coloured decorative floral ornament typical of Qur'ans from the Herat region, Afghanistan, 16th century.



Bright tenth verse marker written in the margin with a delicate central floral work, from a Qur'an written in *rayhani* script, Persia, 16th century.



Decorative palmette with golden arabesque lattice from a surah header panel, North Africa, 18th century.



Unusually extended marginal ornament indicating the start of a new *juz'*; from an Indian Qur'an, early 19th century.

رَدِّ بِنْتِ بِنْتِ بِنْتِ

نَهْلِ







References

Preface

1. In Islam, the proper name of God is the Arabic term 'Allah'. This is the personal name of 'The One and Only True Deity', who created the universe and all that it contains. Moreover, the word 'Allah' expresses the uniqueness of 'Allah' more accurately than the word 'God', which can adopt a plural form, whereas the word 'Allah' has no plural or gender. Furthermore, from an Islamic viewpoint, Allah is also the most precious name of God.

2. Regarded as a jewel amongst stones, and the most beloved of Allah's creation, Muhammad is the last Prophet of Islam (570-632 CE); he is also known as the 'Seal of the Prophets'. When Muslims write Prophet Muhammad's name, they usually include the statement 'May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him' or ﷺ in Arabic.

Introduction

1. The Kaaba is the most sacred site in Islam and is located inside the Sacred Mosque (Masjid-al-Haram) in Makkah, Arabia. The Kaaba is at the very heart of the Islamic world and represents the focal point toward which Muslims all over the world pray five times a day. It was built by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them).

2. For a partial list, see: F. Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, London, 1992, p. 67.

The Need for Messages from Allah

1. For a detailed review of the early history of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, see: Muhammad M. al-Azami, *The History of the Qur'anic Text*, UK Islamic Academy, 2003, chapters 14-16.

The Final Revelation from Allah

1. *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, 1/350.
2. Ibn Kathir, *Tafseer al-Qur'an*, Darusalaam, Riyadh, 2001.
3. *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, 2/28.
4. Muhammad Abd al-'Adheem az Zarqaanee, *Manaahil al-'Irfaan fi 'Uloom al-Qur'an*, Dar al-Fikr, Cairo. n.d.
5. Ibn Kathir, *Tafseer al-Qur'an*, Darusalaam, Riyadh, 2001.

The Three Stages of Revelation

1. Ibn Kathir, *Tafseer al-Qur'an*, Darusalaam, Riyadh, 2001.
2. Manna Qattaan in *Mabahith fi 'Uloom al-Qur'an*.
3. For further aspects of the Qur'an's miraculous nature see: Rashida Begum Alam, *The Islam Guide, An Insight into the Faith, History and Civilisation*, Exhibition Islam, 2007.

The Challenge in the Qur'an

1. Stephen S. Bilynskyj, *God, Nature, and the Concept of Miracle*, Ph.D. Diss.: Notre Dame, 1982, p. 10-42.
2. Dr. William Lane Craig, *The Problem of Miracles: A Historical and Philosophical Perspective*. Available online.
3. 'Abd al-Jabbar, *I'jaz al-Qur'an*, Cairo, 1960, p. 224; Ali Ibn Isa al-Rummani, *Thalath Rasa'il Ijaz al-Qur'an*, Ed. M. Khalaf Allah & M. Sallam, Cairo, 1956, p. 97; Hamd Ibn Muhammad al-Khatibi, *al-Bayan fi I'jaz al-Qur'an*, Ed. Dr 'Abd al-Alim, Muslim University, Aligarh, India, 1953, p. 36; Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Tayyib Baqillani, *al-I'jaz al-Qur'an*. Ed. A. Saqr, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, pp. 86-89; A'isha 'Abd ar-Rahman, *at-Tafsir al-Bayani li-Qur'an al-Karim*, 3rd ed, Cairo, 1968.



Opposite top

Brass quill holder and inkwell. Writing was a profession of scribes up until a century ago. To meet with modern demands of the time, this travelling scribe was invented. The travelling scribes used this magnificent item to hold their quills and ink, tucking these cases into their belts with the ink pot keeping them from slipping through. This is a 200 year old piece from Ottoman Turkey. *Exhibition Islam Collection*.

Opposite bottom

North African Islamic calligraphers inkwell. This antique scribe's inkwell is made from stone. It has one deep inkwell in the centre surrounded by eight shallow ones, possibly to write the text of the Qur'an in different colours. *Exhibition Islam Collection*.

The Challenge in the Qur'an (continued)

4. Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran*, Oxford University Press, 1998. p. x; Bruce Lawrence, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol VII, Issue I, 2005. Approximating Saj' in English Renditions of the Qur'an: A Close Reading of Suran 93 (al-Duha) and the basmala p. 64; Devin J. Stewart, *Saj' in the Qur'an: Prosody and Structure*, in *The Koran: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, Edited by Colin Turner, Vol. II.
5. Metrical speech is a form of speech that employs a strict rhythmical pattern, that is, it follows a type of poetic metre.
6. Louis Cheikho, *Shu'ara' al-Nasraniyah*, 1890-1891, Beirut.
7. Sir Charles J. Lyall, *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry*, p. xlv-lii and William Wright, 1955 (1898).
8. Von Denffer, *'Ulum al-Qur'an: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an*, The Islamic Foundation, 2003 (Revised Ed. 1994), p. 75.
9. Devin J. Stewart, *Rhymed Prose. Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2008.
10. Angelika Neuwrith, *Rhetoric and the Qur'an. Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill, 2008.
11. F. Arbuthnot, *The Construction of the Bible and the Koran*, London, 1885, p 5.
12. See: *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*; *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*; *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* and *Ma'riful Qur'an* by.
13. The influential Egyptian Litterateur born in 1889 and died in 1973. Lecture entitled, *Prose in the second and third centuries after the Hijrah*, delivered at the Geographical Society in Cairo 1930, Dar al Ma-arif.
14. Mohammad Khalifa, *The Authorship of the Qur'an: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*. Edited by Colin Turner, Vol. I, p.129.
15. Mitwalli al-Sharawi, *The Miracles of the Qur'an*, Dar ul Taqwa, p. 31.
16. Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran*, Oxford University Press, 1998. p. x.
17. Dr. Adel M. A. Abbas, Anne P. Fretwell, *Science Miracles, No Sticks or Snakes*, Beltsville, Maryland, USA: Amana Publications: 2000.
18. Devin J. Stewart, *Saj' in the Qur'an: Prosody and Structure*, p.102.
19. Ali Ibn Isa al-Rummani, *Thalath Rasa'il Ijaz al-Qur'an*, Ed. M. Khalaf Allah & M. Sallam, Cairo, 1956, p. 97-98.
20. Devin J. Stewart, *Saj' in the Qur'an: Prosody and Structure*, p.102.
21. *ibid*, p.84.
22. *ibid*, p. 90.
23. See: H. Abdul-Raof, *Exploring the Qur'an*, Al-Maktoum Institute Academic Press, 2003, p. 265-398; H. Abdul-Raof, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture and Exegesis*, Curzon Press, 2000, p 95-137; F. Esack, *Qur'anic Hermeneutics: Problems and Prospects*, The Muslim World, 1993, Vol. 83, No. 2. p. 126 -128.
24. *ibid*.
25. Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 187.
26. Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 229.
27. Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 187.
28. Surah al-Baqarah (The Heifer) 2: 229. For further detail see: Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Stylistics: A Linguistic Analysis*, p 91-92.
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The Challenge in the Qur'an (continued)

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Part of Surah ad-Dhuha
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from an early 20th century 5
metre long decorative Qur'an
scroll. Hand written in large
thuluth script and splendidly
illuminated with strong use
of colour.

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The English translation of the Qur'anic verses used in this book have been taken from: *Interpretation of the Meaning of The Noble Qur'aan in the English Language* by Dr. Muhammad Taqiuddeen al-Hilaalee, Ph.D. and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Published by DARUSSALAM ©, Riyadh.

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Late 16th to early 17th
 century *Qur'an* from
 Uzbekistan written in large
muhaqqaq style script. The
 text is fully vocalised in black
 with some limited use of red
 ink. The surah header panel
 has red and black text with a
 white outline upon a multi-
 coloured foliate background.
 The page shows the end of
 Surah al-Mumtahanah (The
 Woman to be examined, 60)
 and the start of Surah as-Saff
 (The Row or the Rank, 61).

بِهْتَنَارٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلِهِمْ وَلَا يَعْصِيكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ

فَبَايَعَهُمْ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ اللَّهُ أَزَالَهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَدْسُوكُمْ أَلَا خِرَةً كَمَا يَشْرُ الْكَفَّارُ

سورة الصن من اصحاب الفنون السبع عشرة ايات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سَبِّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ يَا أَيُّهَا

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَمْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا

تَفْعَلُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًا كَانَهُمْ نَبِيًّا

مَرْصُوصًا وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

أَلَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلِمَ تَزْعُمُونَ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلِمَ تَزْعُمُونَ

“O Allah forgive our living and our dead, those who are with us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our menfolk and our womenfolk.

O Allah, whomever you give life from among us give him life in Islam, and whomever you take away from us take him away in Faith. O Allah, do not forbid us their reward and do not send us astray after them”.

(Abu Dawood, 3/211)



Abdul Hameed
 Ali Muhammad
 Fateh Muhammad
 Ghulam Muhammad
 Jan Muhammad
 Shah Muhammad
 Fatimah Bibi
 Hafiz Koshee Muhammad
 Hafiz Khuda Bashk
 Hamida Bibi
 Hanifa Bibi
 Hashmat Ali
 Karima Bibi
 Mian Khair Deen
 Mian Shah Muhammad
 Mian Suleyman
 Muhammad Hanif
 Muhammad Basheer
 Muhammad Arshad
 Muhammad Tufayl
 Muhammad Zahid
 Zaynab Alam



Abdul Ghafoor
 Abdul Ghaffar Gohar
 Abdul Haq
 Abdur Rahman
 Abdur Rasheed
 Aziza Begum
 Bilqees Bibi
 Fatimah Bibi
 Ghafforan Bibi
 Hamida Bibi
 Hafiz Nur Muhammad
 Ihsan ul-Haq
 Kulsoom Akhtar
 Mian Ghafoor Ahmad
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 Muhammad Ibraheem
 Muhammad Shareef
 Nisaar ul-Haq
 Rashida Begum Alam
 Rashida Bibi
 Shamsul Haq
 Sooghra Bibi
 Tariq Iqbal
 Tariq Mahmood
 Uthman Abdul Ghaffar
 Zohra Begum



Abdul Majeed
 Abdul Waheed
 Bibi Rasool
 Ghulam Rasool
 Hajira Majeed
 Jamila Majeed
 Muhammad Akram
 Muhammad Munir
 Moreed Hussain
 Zaynab Rasool



Syed Abdul Raouf
 Syed Abdul Shakoor
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 Syeda Farhat
 Syed Hamaad Raza Jaffery
 Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah
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Fatimah Bibi
 Imdad Hussain
 Muhammad Aslam
 Niaz Ahmad
 Sakina Bibi



Abdullah Khan
 Haji Mian Ahmad
 Hafizah Mariam
 Mariam Khatoon
 Mian Yusuf
 Mullah Mian Sultan
 Suleyman Yusuf
 Shaikh Ahmad
 Shamsud Din



Akhund Khair Muhammad
 Sikander Humayun Ansari
 Shamim Haroon



Ali Muhammad
 Basharat Ali
 Bashira Begum
 Fatih Muhammad
 Fatima Bibi
 Fatima Bibi
 Fazal Bibi
 Fazal Muhammad
 Ghulam Hassan
 Ghulam Nabi
 Haji Abdul Majid
 Halima Bibi
 Juney Begum
 Kareem Bibi
 Kushi Muhammad
 Majidah Begum
 Mian Muhammad Shafique Anwar
 Muhammad Javad Alam
 Muhammad Ibraheem
 Muhammad Ibraheem
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Abdul Hamid
 Abdullah
 Aiysha Bibi
 Amir Hamid
 Asif Chowdhry
 Fatima Bibi
 Fazal Dean
 Fazal Muhammad
 Hajirah Bibi
 Juney Bibi
 Nur Muhammad
 Rahmat Ali



Ramzan Bibi
 Rashida Chowdhry
 Sairan Bibi



Barkhat ibn Nawab Din
 Shameem Akhtar ibnt Nawab Din
 Umm Mahmoodah Muhammad Bibi



Amina Phoplonker
 Aiysha Palekar
 Habiba Phoplonker
 Mumtaz Palekar
 Shaikh Ahmed Abdul Gafoor Palekar
 Shaikh Ismail Ahmed Phoplonker



Saeed Ali
 Sakina Begum
 Walayat Khan



Abdul Malik Chaffee
 Kalandar Jan
 Kaneez Bi Ali
 Munawer Muhammad Naseem
 Muhammad Musa
 Ruqsana Aziz
 Sarwar Hanif
 Saeed Sattar



**Peace and blessings of Allah be upon
the Last Prophet and Messenger,
Muhammad**



**a mercy to mankind
and the best of all creation.**



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